Shrimad-Bhagavatam

with the

Sarartha-darshini

commentary of

Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakura

Translated by H.H. Bhanu Swami

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Svami Prabhupada,

who inspired the world to take up the path of bhakti.

I gratefully acknowledge HG Shridhar Shyam das for his assistance in editing this work.

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His Holiness Bhanu Swami Maharaj ISKCON

Hare Krishna Land,

India

First Edition: 2008

Canto - X

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Chapter One

The Advent of Lord Kṛṣṇa

||10.1.1||

śrī-rājovāca

kathito vaṁśa-vistāro bhavatā soma-sūryayoḥ

rājñāṁ cobhaya-vaṁśyānāṁ caritaṁ paramādbhutam

TRANSLATION

King Parīkṣit said: My dear lord, you have elaborately described the dynasties of both the moon-god and the sun-god, with the exalted and wonderful character of their kings.

COMMENTARY

In this verse Parīkṣit Mahārāja praises Śukadeva Gosvāmī for his previous *Bhāgavatam* descriptions. He did this to thank Śukadeva Gosvāmī and to encourage him to continue speaking *hari-katha*. Being naturally a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Parīkṣit Mahārāja especially wanted to hear more about the wonderful glories of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Though the word *sūrya*, the sun-god, would usually come before *soma*, the moon-god, *soma* is mentioned first. This is because the moon-god Candra (*soma*) is the grandson of Brahmā; an *aṁśa* of Brahmā; the deity of the mind, and most importantly Śrī Kṛṣṇa appeared in his dynasty, *soma-vaṁsa*. Though the wonderful activities of Svāyambhuva and his dynasty were related in the Fourth Canto, they did not culminate in sweetness. However, sweetness was finally attained with the descriptions of Kṛṣṇa, who appeared in the moon dynasty (*soma-vaṁsa*) and Lord Rāma of the sun dynasty (*sūrya-vaṁśa*). Thus, the discussions of these dynasties became very prominent in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*.

||10.1.2||

yadoś ca dharma-śīlasya nitarāṁ muni-sattama

tatrāṁśenāvatīrṇasya viṣṇor vīryāṇi śaṁsa naḥ

TRANSLATION

O best of munis, you have also described the descendants of Yadu, who were very pious and strictly adherent to religious principles. Now, if you will, kindly describe the wonderful, glorious activities of Lord Viṣṇu, or Kṛṣṇa, who appeared in that Yadu dynasty with Baladeva, His plenary expansion.

COMMENTARY

yadoś: "You have also previously described the pious nature of Yadu. Though Yadu disobeyed his father's order, because of his pure devotion, his exalted character is praised in the Ninth and Eleventh Cantos of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*."

muni-sattama: Parīkṣit addresses Śukadeva as the king of the *munis—muni sattama*, because as a sage (*muni*) Śukadeva Gosvāmī is completely knowledgeable, and as a devotee (*sat*) he is the chief since he established the supreme position of *bhakti*. *viṣṇor vīryāṇi:* "Please describe the heroic exploits (*vīryani*) of He who has appeared (*avatīrṇasya*) as that person whose *aṁśa* is Viṣṇu in Vaikuṇṭha." Another meaning: "Please describe the exploits partially (*aṁśena*), since it is impossible to completely describe Kṛṣṇa's pastimes."

||10.1.3||

avatīrya yador vaṁśe bhagavān bhūta-bhāvanaḥ

kṛtavān yāni viśvātmā tāni no vada vistarāt

TRANSLATION

The Supersoul, the Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the cause of the cosmic manifestation, appeared in the dynasty of Yadu. Please tell me elaborately about His glorious activities and character, from the beginning to the end of His life.

COMMENTARY

Parīkṣit Mahārāja said, "Śukadeva, previously you briefly told how Kṛṣṇa was taken from Kaṁsa's prison to Vraja. But you did not explain everything in that description. O *muni*, you described it in only two verses. Now I pray that you will describe this incident in many verses."

bhagavān bhūta-bhāvanah: Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa descends to immerse the *jīvas* (*bhūta*) in *prema* (*bhāvana*) and to fill all living entities with *bhāva*. Many verses support this point such as *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (9.24.64): *vākyair vikrama-līlayā, nṛlokam ramayām āsa, mūrtyā sarvāṅga-ramyayā*, "By His pleasing smiles, affectionate behavior, instructions and His uncommon heroic pastimes like lifting Govardhana Hill, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, appearing in His transcendental body, pleased all of human society." *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (3.2.11) explains how Kṛṣṇa gave pleasure to human society (*avitṛpta-dṛśāṁ nṛṇām*) by revealing His beautiful all-attractive form. Even after tasting Kṛṣṇa's sweetness, however the people remained unsatisfied. Everyone developed a desire to constantly taste the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa. *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (11.1.6) says: *sva-mūrtyā loka-lāvanya-nirmuktyā locanaṁ nṛṇām*, "The sweetness of Kṛṣṇa's beauty steals the functions of all the senses. The eyes no longer desire to see any other form. Drowning them in the ocean of His beauty, Syamasundara gives them *prema*".

viśvātmā: Kṛṣṇa is called *viśvātmā*, the Supersoul of the entire universe or Paramātmā, because He is the true object of love rather than the body or other *jīvas*. This is explained in Brahmā's prayers in the fourteenth chapter of the Tenth Canto. *vada vistarāt:* "Please explain extensively (*vistarāt*) or elaborately since my intelligence is slow to grasp the subject."

||10.1.4||

nivṛtta-tarṣair upagīyamānād bhavauṣadhāc chrotra-mano-'bhirāmāt

ka uttamaśloka-guṇānuvādāt pumān virajyeta vinā paśughnāt

TRANSLATION

Glorification of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is performed in the *paramparā* system; that is, it is conveyed from spiritual master to disciple. Such glorification is relished by those no longer interested in the false, temporary glorification of this cosmic manifestation. Descriptions of the Lord are the right medicine for the conditioned soul undergoing repeated birth and death. Therefore, who will cease hearing such glorification of the Lord except a butcher or one who is killing his own self?

COMMENTARY

I am taking whatever remnants Śrīdhara Swami and Sanātana Gosvāmī have left.

King Parīkṣit said to Śukadeva Gosvāmī, "I am a tiny *jīva* bound up by the disease of material life. How can I stop drinking the great medicine of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes recited by you, who are the best of doctors endowed with the greatest fortune?" With this intention Parīkṣit Mahārāja speaks this verse.

tarṣair: thirst, *tṛṣna*, or attachment to material enjoyment.

nivṛtta-tarṣair: By taking the medicine of hearing Kṛṣṇa's pastimes one extinguishes (*nivṛtta*) the thirst (*tṛṣna*) for material life. *Nivṛtta-tarṣair* indicates pure devotees, not *jñānīs*, because of the use of present tense and the prefix *upa* in *upagīyamānād*. *Jñānīs* meditate but they do not chant Kṛṣṇa's glories. Liberated pure devotees continually glorify the practice of hearing *Kṛṣṇa-katha* over *jñāna* and other processes.

upagīyāmād: Upa indicates intense or continuous glorification. In other words, “We loudly praise this medicine, as it has cured us of our disease. What more can be said about tasting it? You (Śukadeva) are the taster.” *bhavauṣadhāc:* Who could stop drinking the sweet topics of Kṛṣṇa which are like a medicine (*ausadhī*) to cure the disease of material existence (*bhava*)? In other words, those who get the opportunity to hear the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa will not stop listening because it cures them of the disease of material existence. *chrotra: srotra*, listener. Because such topics are please the mind (*manobhirāmāt*) neither the speaker of *Kṛṣṇa-katha* nor the listener tires of hearing about Kṛṣṇa. *mano-’bhirāmāt:* Unlike other medicines, this medicine does not have a bitter taste. Therefore Parīkṣit Mahārāja says mano-’bhirāmāt: *kṛṣṇa-katha* gives great pleasure to the ears and mind. Therefore drink the nectar of the Bhagavata with both your ears and mind. *paśughnāt:* Only people involved in killing animals (*paśughnāt*) in sacrifice with a longing to attain celestial enjoyment on Svargaloka will not listen to these topics. *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (3.3.18) also confirms, *ayājayad dharma-sutam*, that those seeking *dharma, artha* and *kāma* (religion, wealth and enjoyment) have no taste for the name, qualities and resplendent pastimes of the all-attractive Madhusūdana Kṛṣṇa.

Another meaning: “Who would give up drinking the topics of Kṛṣṇa that are recited by Śrī Guru? Even liberated souls loudly glorify the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa. Only those desiring wealth and material enjoyment would stop hearing about Kṛṣṇa. Thus Parīkṣit Mahārāja says that only a killer of animals (paśughnāt) would stop hearing *Kṛṣṇa-katha* and no one else.

||10.1.5-7||

pitāmahā me samare ’marañjayair devavratādyātirathais timiṅgilaiḥ

duratyayaṁ kaurava-sainya-sāgaraṁ kṛtvātaran vatsa-padaṁ sma yat-plavāḥ

drauṇy-astra-vipluṣṭam idaṁ mad-aṅgaṁ santāna-bījaṁ kuru-pāṇḍavānām

jugopa kukṣiṁ gata ātta-cakro mātuś ca me yaḥ śaraṇaṁ gatāyāḥ

vīryāṇi tasyākhila-deha-bhājām antar bahiḥ pūruṣa-kāla-rūpaiḥ

prayacchato mṛtyum utāmṛtaṁ ca māyā-manuṣyasya vadasva vidvan

TRANSLATION

Taking the boat of Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet, my grandfather Arjuna and others crossed the ocean of the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra, in which such commanders as Bhīṣmadeva resembled great fish that could very easily have swallowed them. By the mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa, my grandfathers crossed this ocean, which was very difficult to cross, as easily as one steps over the hoofprint of a calf. Because my

mother surrendered unto Lord Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, the Lord, Sudarśana-cakra in hand, entered her womb and saved my body, the body of the last remaining descendant of the Kurus and the Pāṇḍavas, which was almost destroyed by the fiery weapon of Aśvatthāmā. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, appearing within and outside of all materially embodied living beings by His own potency in the forms of eternal time—that is, as Paramātmā and as virāṭ-rūpa—gave liberation to everyone, either as cruel death or as life. Kindly enlighten me by describing His transcendental characteristics.

COMMENTARY

Verse 5: "I should also hear the topics of Kṛṣṇa because He is the protector of our dynasty." Thus Parīkṣit Mahārāja speaks this verse.

"My grandfather crossed the ocean of the Kaurava army, though it was difficult to surmount because of Bhīṣma and others (*devavratādy*), who were like *timingala* fish (*timiṅgilaiḥ*) that could easily swallow or defeat the demigods (*amarañjayair*). Kṛṣṇa made that ocean as insignificant as the water in a calf's hoof-print.

"The cause was taking shelter of the boat (*yat-plavāḥ*) of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. Please speak about that person. Surrender to Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet enables one to cross the ocean of material existence."

Verse 6: "I must certainly hear about Kṛṣṇa because He is my only protector." With this in mind Parīkṣit Mahārāja speaks this verse.

ātta-cakro: The holder of the *cakra*, Kṛṣṇa, along with His club, (mentioned in the First Canto), entered into my mother, Uttara, who had surrendered to Him. The Lord easily saved my body from being burned (*vipluṣṭam*) by the heat of Aśvatthāmā's weapon (*drauṇy astra*).

ca: indicates that Kṛṣṇa also protected the limbs of Parīkṣit Mahārāja's mother.

Verse 7: Kṛṣṇa's topics should be heard because He alone bestows the final goal on all those with material bodies (*ākhila deha bhājam*). With this intention the present verse is spoken.

bahiḥ: outside Kṛṣṇa awards death to those envious (*bahiḥ*) of His devotees. *antar:* Kṛṣṇa gives eternal life to those who are His near and dear devotees (*antar*). *puruṣa:* To devotees like Vasudeva, Kṛṣṇa bestows bliss in His two handed or four handed human form.

kāla-rupaiḥ: To demons like Kaṁsa, Kṛṣṇa appears in the form of time or death. According to the statements of *Bhāgavatam*, Kṛṣṇa's appearance resembles the prescription of rock candy to a person afflicted with jaundice. Though Kṛṣṇa first appears as time to award death to the demons, He later awards them liberation.

prayacchataḥ: (the giver) is used in present tense to indicate that it is being seen before Parīkṣit's eyes, or to convey the eternal nature of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. *māyā manuṣyasya:* The body of the Supreme Lord is made of eternal spiritual energy called *māyā*, whereas the body of a human is made of material energy.

The Madhya Bhāṣya of the *Pramanita Śruti* says, *ato māyāmayaṁ viṣṇuṁ pravadanti manīṣiṇaḥ*: "The sages say the body accepted by Lord Viṣṇu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is called *māyāmaya*. Viṣṇu's body is not formed of the external energy. Therefore, this *māyā* refers to Kṛṣṇa's internal spiritual potency, *yogamāyā*.

||10.1.8||

rohiṇyās tanayaḥ prokto rāmaḥ saṅkarṣaṇas tvayā

devakyā garbha-sambandhaḥ kuto dehāntaraṁ vinā

TRANSLATION

My dear Śukadeva Gosvāmī, you have already explained that Saṅkarṣaṇa, who belongs to the second quadruple, appeared as the son of Rohiṇī named Balarāma. If Balarāma was not transferred from one body to another, how is it possible that He was first in the womb of Devakī and then in the womb of Rohiṇī? Kindly explain this to me.

COMMENTARY

In the next four verses (8-11) Parīkṣit Mahārāja inquires about the details of Kṛṣṇa's birth. A general description was given in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (9.24.54-55) which describes the birth of Devakī's seventh child with the words *Saṅkarṣaṇam* (saṅkarṣaṇa) and *ahi-īsvaram* (the supreme controller). Here Parīkṣit Mahārāja says, "Śukadeva

Gosvāmī, elsewhere you have said Saṅkarṣaṇa is the son of Rohiṇī, so how could He come from Devakī's womb without having to change bodies?"

||10.1.9||

kasmān mukundo bhagavān pitur gehād vrajaṁ gataḥ

kva vāsaṁ jñātibhiḥ sārdhaṁ kṛtavān sātvatāṁ patiḥ

TRANSLATION

Why did Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, leave the house of His father, Vasudeva, and transfer Himself to the house of Nanda in Vṛndāvana? Where did the Lord, the master of the Yadu dynasty, live with His relatives in Vṛndāvana?

COMMENTARY

vraja: Kṛṣṇa went from Vasudeva's home (the prison cell) in Mathurā to Vraja. Here Vraja means Mahāvana. After going to Vraja, Kṛṣṇa left the home of Nanda. Parīkṣit Mahārāja is asking, "Where did Kṛṣṇa go in Vṛndāvana to establish His home along with the cowherd men?"

||10.1.10||

vraje vasan kim akaron madhupuryāṁ ca keśavaḥ

bhrātaraṁ cāvadhīt kaṁsaṁ mātur addhātad-arhaṇam

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa lived both in Vṛndāvana and in Mathurā. What did He do there? Why did He kill Kaṁsa, His mother's brother? Such killing is not at all sanctioned in the śāstras.

COMMENTARY

Madhupuryām: refers to Mathurā and Dvārakā, the cities of the descendents of Madhu. "Why did Kṛṣṇa kill His mother's (Devakī) brother Kaṁsa? Kṛṣṇa should not have done that, since Kaṁsa was his mother's brother."

||10.1.11||

dehaṁ mānuṣam āśritya kati varṣāṇi vṛṣṇibhiḥ

yadu-puryāṁ sahāvātsīt patnyaḥ katy abhavan prabhoḥ

TRANSLATION

Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, has no material body, yet He appears as a human being. For how many years did He live with the descendants of Vṛṣṇi? How many wives did He marry, and for how many years did He live in Dvārakā?

COMMENTARY

How many years did Kṛṣṇa live with the Yadus?

dehaṁ mānuṣam āśritya: By using this phrase, Parīkṣit Mahārāja indicates that the years should be in human calculation, not that of the *devas*.

In other places the Lord is referred to as "*paramātma narakrti*" or "*budha parabrahma manusya cihnadhari*." The *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* says, *narākṛti para-braḥma kāraṇa-mānuṣaḥ*: "The Supreme Absolute Truth, for His own purpose, appears in a humanlike form, although He is the source of everything." These *śāstric* statements show that the human-like form of Kṛṣṇa is His *svarūpa* or spiritual form. Thus the phrase *dehaṁ mānuṣam* cannot mean that Kṛṣṇa has a material body.

||10.1.12||

etad anyac ca sarvaṁ me mune kṛṣṇa-viceṣṭitam

vaktum arhasi sarvajña śraddadhānāya vistṛtam

TRANSLATION

O great sage, who know everything about Kṛṣṇa, please describe in detail all the activities of which I have inquired and also those of which I have not, for I have full faith and am very eager to hear of them.

||10.1.13||

naiṣātiduḥsahā kṣun māṁ tyaktodam api bādhate

pibantaṁ tvan-mukhāmbhoja-cyutaṁ hari-kathāmṛtam

TRANSLATION

Because of my vow on the verge of death, I have given up even drinking water, yet because I am drinking the nectar of topics about Kṛṣṇa, which is flowing from the lotus mouth of your Lordship, my hunger and thirst, which are extremely difficult to bear, cannot hinder me.

COMMENTARY

"Parīkṣit, because you are afflicted by hunger and thirst you should rest a while." In response to Śukadeva's advice, Parīkṣit speaks this verse: "It was due to hunger and thirst that I lost my discrimination, and placed the snake around the neck of the *muni*. Now that I am drinking *hari-kathāmṛtam*, the nectar of the pastimes of Hari, I have completely given up food and water. Hunger and thirst no longer afflict me."

Why is the present tense used here? Because hunger will manifest the moment one stops hearing about Kṛṣṇa. *āmbhoja:* lotus; This word suggests the sweetness and intoxicating effect of the topics of Hari. For this reason, Parīkṣit Mahārāja has forgotten his intolerable hunger and thirst. The lotus suggests that the mouth of Śukadeva is fragrant like a lotus. *āmṛtam:* nectar; Indicates that the lotus mouth (*mukhāmbhoja*) of Śukadeva Gosvāmī is like the moon in that it drips nectar; bestows joy; and destroys the darkness in the hearts of the listeners. It also means that Parīkṣit, being thirsty for the pastimes of Hari (*hari-kathāmṛtam*), is like a *cakora* bird longing for the moonlight. All of this expresses Parīkṣit Mahārāja's great attachment for hearing the topics of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

||10.1.14||

sūta uvāca

evaṁ niśamya bhṛgu-nandana sādhu-vādaṁ

vaiyāsakiḥ sa bhagavān atha viṣṇu-rātam

pratyarcya kṛṣṇa-caritaṁ kali-kalmaṣa-ghnaṁ

vyāhartum ārabhata bhāgavata-pradhānaḥ

TRANSLATION

Sūta Gosvāmī said: O son of Bhṛgu [Śaunaka Ṛṣi], after Śukadeva Gosvāmī, the most respectable devotee, the son of Vyāsadeva, heard the pious questions of Mahārāja Parīkṣit, he thanked the King with great respect. Then he began to

discourse on topics concerning Kṛṣṇa, which are the remedy for all sufferings in this age of Kali.

COMMENTARY

bhṛgu-nandana: Sūta Gosvāmī speaks, "O son of Bhṛgu [Śaunaka Ṛsi]."

kali kalmaṣa ghnaṁ: Śukadeva began describing the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa which dispel the sorrows of the *jīvas* of *kali-yuga* and destroy the worst of sins. *viṣṇu rātam:* always protected by Viṣṇu; Śukadeva began describing Kṛṣṇa's pastimes to Parīkṣit (*viṣṇu rātam*).

bhāgavata pradhānaḥ: chief devotee; describes Śukadeva as the chief among devotees, who shows great regard for the book *bhagāvata* and the devotee *bhagāvata*.

||10.1.15||

śrī-śuka uvāca

samyag vyavasitā buddhis tava rājarṣi-sattama

vāsudeva-kathāyāṁ te yaj jātā naiṣṭhikī ratiḥ

TRANSLATION

Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O Your Majesty, best of all saintly kings, because you are greatly attracted to topics of Vāsudeva, it is certain that your intelligence is firmly fixed in spiritual understanding, which is the only true goal for humanity. Because that attraction is unceasing, it is certainly sublime.

COMMENTARY

samyag vyavasitā buddhis: Śukadeva Gosvāmī said, "You have developed firm attachment to the Lord because (*yat*) your intelligence (*buddhi*) is fixed (*samyag vyavasitā*). *rājarṣi sattama:* You previously addressed me as *muni sattama*, the best among the *munis* and devotees. This is my response. O king, you are the best among saintly kings (*rajarṣi sattama*) and devotees because of your superior devotion to the Lord. By Kṛṣṇa's mercy you defeated the power of *brahma teja* (Aśvattāmā's *astra*) at the time of birth and death."

||10.1.16||

vāsudeva-kathā-praśnaḥ puruṣāṁs trīn punāti hi

vaktāraṁ pracchakaṁ śrotṝṁs tat-pāda-salilaṁ yathā

TRANSLATION

The Ganges, emanating from the toe of Lord Viṣṇu, purifies the three worlds, the upper, middle and lower planetary systems. Similarly, when one asks questions about the pastimes and characteristics of Lord Vāsudeva, Kṛṣṇa, three varieties of men are purified: the speaker or preacher, he who inquires, and the people in general who listen.

COMMENTARY

pāda salilaṁ yathā: Hari-katha purifies three types of persons, just like the *caraṇāmṛta* of *śālagrām* or a deity, which purifies three types of persons: those who put it on their head, those who drink it and those who do both. It also means that the topics of Hari are just like the Gaṅgā, which purifies those in the upper, middle and lower worlds. The topics of Hari purify the speaker, the inquirer and the listener in descending order. *Hari-katha* is most purifying for the speaker, then the inquirer and then the listener.

||10.1.17||

bhūmir dṛpta-nṛpa-vyāja-daityānīka-śatāyutaiḥ

ākrāntā bhūri-bhāreṇa brahmāṇaṁ śaraṇaṁ yayau

TRANSLATION

Once when mother earth was overburdened by hundreds of thousands of military phalanxes of various conceited demons dressed like kings, she approached Lord Brahmā for relief.

COMMENTARY

“Now hear the famous reason for Kṛṣṇa’s appearance.” Śukadeva Gosvāmī speaks with this intention.

daityānīka: Due to being afflicted by the burden of the sins of countless soldiers of the *daityās*, demons, who though not born of Diti’s lineage, attained their demonic status by

their actions, the earth personified approached Brahmā situated on the peak of Mount Meru.

brahmāṇaṁ śaraṇaṁ yayau: This was not the Brahmā who usually stays on Satyaloka. In the Satya-yuga before the appearance of Kṛṣṇa, King Raivata went to Brahmā on Satyaloka along with his daughter Revatī to ask about his daughter's marriage. In Brahmā's assembly the Gandharvas Haha and Huhu were singing. During the length of their one song on Satyaloka (Brahmāloka), Satya and Tretā *yugas* on earth finished, and Dvāpara-yuga also passed. Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were about to appear.

Brahmā said, "Please give your daughter in marriage to Balarāma, who has now appeared on the earth planet. He is a suitable groom." Thus, situated on Satyaloka, Hiranyagarbha Brahmā was listening to the song while Satya, Tretā and Dvāpara yugas passed by on the earth planet until Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma's appearance.

bhūmiḥ: The deity of the earth could not have approached that Brahmā on Satyaloka to make her request. Bhūmi, earth personified, went instead to Vairāja Brahmā living on Mount Meru. The great sage Parāśara Muni confirms this: *jagama dharini meroh samaje tridivaukasam*, "The goddess of the earth went along with the demigods to Mount Meru."

||10.1.18||

gaur bhūtvāśru-mukhī khinnā krandantī karuṇaṁ vibhoḥ

upasthitāntike tasmai vyasanaṁ samavocata

TRANSLATION

Mother earth assumed the form of a cow. Very much distressed, with tears in her eyes, she appeared before Lord Brahmā and told him about her misfortune.

||10.1.19||

brahmā tad-upadhāryātha saha devais tayā saha

jagāma sa-tri-nayanas tīraṁ kṣīra-payo-nidheḥ

TRANSLATION

Thereafter, having heard of the distress of mother earth, Lord Brahmā, with mother earth, Lord Śiva and all the other demigods, approached the shore of the ocean of milk.

COMMENTARY

tad-upadhāryā: After hearing from the earth personified and understanding everything rightly, Brahmā went to the milk ocean.

atha: The word *atha* is excessive usage if it means "then or thereafter." It can be explained as follows: Brahmā thought: "My work is creation and Viṣṇu's work is maintenance. For this work of maintenance it is better that we go to Viṣṇu, resting on the milk ocean. We should go and request His help." After considering in this way, Brahmā left for the milk ocean.

sa-tri-nayanas: Lord Śiva, who has three eyes. There were two tasks here: protection of the earth and destruction of the demons. Thinking that he could engage Indra in protecting the earth and Śiva in destroying the demons, Brahmā went to the milk ocean with Śiva and the demigods.

||10.1.20||

tatra gatvā jagannāthaṁ deva-devaṁ vṛṣākapim

puruṣaṁ puruṣa-sūktena upatasthe samāhitaḥ

TRANSLATION

After reaching the shore of the ocean of milk, the demigods worshiped the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Viṣṇu, the master of the whole universe, the supreme God of all gods, who provides for everyone and diminishes everyone's suffering. With great attention, they worshiped Lord Viṣṇu, who lies on the ocean of milk, by reciting the Vedic mantras known as the Puruṣa-sūkta.

COMMENTARY

Why should Brahmā go to Viṣṇu? This verse answers the question.

Jagannāthaṁ, Deva-devaṁ, Vṛṣākapim: Viṣṇu is Jagannātha, Lord of the universe; Devadeva, the worshipable deity of all the demigods; and also Vṛṣākapi, He who fulfills all desires and removes all suffering. By visiting Viṣṇu, Brahmā and the demigods proclaim their subordination to Viṣṇu's authority in protecting the earth.

||10.1.21||

giraṁ samādhau gagane samīritāṁ niśamya vedhās tridaśān uvāca ha

gāṁ pauruṣīṁ me śṛṇutāmarāḥ punar vidhīyatām āśu tathaiva mā ciram

TRANSLATION

While in trance, Lord Brahmā heard the words of Lord Viṣṇu vibrating in the sky. Thus he told the demigods: O demigods, hear from me the order of Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, the Supreme Person, and execute it attentively without delay.

COMMENTARY

gagane: sky; Brahmā did not directly see or meet Viṣṇu. In a trance of meditation (*samādhau*) Brahmā heard a voice in the sky. From this one can understand that to see Viṣṇu directly is difficult even for Brahmā. Thus when Kṛṣṇa, the origin of Viṣṇu, shows Himself directly to all men when He appears on earth, it is a display of extraordinary mercy, not available at any other time. *gāṁ pauruṣīm:* means the words of Kṣīrodakaśāyī Visnu, the supreme *puruṣa* (person)

||10.1.22||

puraiva puṁsāvadhṛto dharā-jvaro bhavadbhir aṁśair yaduṣūpajanyatām

sa yāvad urvyā bharam īśvareśvaraḥ sva-kāla-śaktyā kṣapayaṁś cared bhuvi

TRANSLATION

Lord Brahmā informed the demigods: Before we submitted our petition to the Lord, He was already aware of the distress on earth. Consequently, for as long as the Lord moves on earth to diminish its burden by His own potency in the form of time, all of you demigods should appear through plenary portions as sons and grandsons in the family of the Yadus.

COMMENTARY

Brahmā repeats the words of Lord Viṣṇu in four verses (22-25).

puṁsā: means Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, because *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* describes Kṛṣṇa as the person who will appear to relieve the problems of the earth: *Kṛṣṇah svayaṁ samabhavat paramaḥ pumān yo* (*Brahma-saṁhitā* 5.39), Kṛṣṇa Himself who is the supreme being,

puṁan, appeared. *avadhṛtaḥ:* known; Kṛṣṇa already knew the sufferings of the earth. *aṁśair yadu:* The demigods should appear along with the Lord's associates such as Uddhava and Sātyaki, who are expansions of the Lord (*aṁśaiḥ*) in the family of Yadu, the Kurus or more specifically the Pāṇḍavas. *īśvareśvaraḥ:* Kṛṣṇa is the Lord of all of lords (*īśvaras*) including Viṣṇu.

||10.1.23||

vasudeva-gṛhe sākṣād bhagavān puruṣaḥ paraḥ

janiṣyate tat-priyārthaṁ sambhavantu sura-striyaḥ

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who has full potency, will personally appear as the son of Vasudeva. Therefore all the wives of the demigods should also appear in order to satisfy Him.

COMMENTARY

sura-striyaḥ: wives of the demigods; refers to expansions of Kṛṣṇa's eternal female companions, who were present in the heavenly planets. Examples are the wives of the Manvantara Avatāras and Lord Vāmana. They performed worship to attain friendship and intimacy with Kṛṣṇa's most dear lovers (Vraja-gopīs). Because of this worship they took birth (*sambhavantu*) in the Yadu dynasty as different *priya sakhīs* of Kṛṣṇa in Bhauma Vṛndāvana to enrich the Lord's transcendental pastimes.

janiṣyate tat-priyārthaṁ: Ujjvala-nīlamaṇī says*, nitya priyanam aṁśas tu*. When Kṛṣṇa appears in the family of the demigods in partial form, His beloveds also appear in the forms of demigoddesses to please Him. When Kṛṣṇa appeared on earth, these *devīs* appeared as young unmarried *gopīs*, *priya sakhīs* of the *nitya-priya sakhīs*.

||10.1.24||

vāsudeva-kalānantaḥ sahasra-vadanaḥ svarāṭ

agrato bhavitā devo hareḥ priya-cikīrṣayā

TRANSLATION

The foremost manifestation of Kṛṣṇa is Saṅkarṣaṇa, who is known as Ananta. He is the origin of all incarnations within this material world. Previous to the

appearance of Lord Kṛṣṇa, this original Saṅkarṣaṇa will appear as Baladeva, just to please the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa in His transcendental pastimes.

COMMENTARY

vāsudeva-kalānantaḥ: Ananta is an *aṁśa* or *kala* (portion) of Baladeva. This is supported with verses like: *evamsena sahasra vadano'nantah* (whose portion is the thousand mouthed Ananta), and *yasyaikāṁśena vidhṛtā jagatī jagataḥ pate*, "O mighty-armed Balarāma, with a single portion of Yourself You hold up the universe." (*Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 10.65.28) Here Baladeva is described as Ananta who is a portion of Vāsudeva.

svarāṭ: usually means independent; he who exists (*rāj* or *rat*) by himself (*sva*), but here it means He who exists with His own brother Kṛṣṇa (*sva*). *deva:* Baladeva, who is existing with his own brother (*svarat*) will appear first (*agrataḥ bhavitā*).

||10.1.25||

viṣṇor māyā bhagavatī yayā sammohitaṁ jagat

ādiṣṭā prabhuṇāṁśena kāryārthe sambhaviṣyati

TRANSLATION

The potency of the Lord, known as viṣṇu-māyā, who is as good as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, will also appear with Lord Kṛṣṇa. This potency, acting in different capacities, captivates all the worlds, both material and spiritual. At the request of her master, she will appear with her different potencies in order to execute the work of the Lord.

COMMENTARY

In order to charm the eternal devotees and bewilder the enemies like Kaṁsa, Kṛṣṇa gave orders to *yogamāyā* and *mahāmāyā*.

viṣṇor māyā: refers to both energies of the Lord, but elsewhere in *Bhāgavatam* it is stated that Kṛṣṇa gave orders to *yogamāyā*. Being ordered by the Lord, *yogamāyā* and her expansion as the external energy *mahāmāyā*, which bewilders the world, will appear.

The *Śruti Vidya* of *Nārada Pañcarātra* states that *mahāmāyā* is an expansion of *yogamāyā*: "Yogamāyā is the *svarūpa śakti* of Lord Viṣṇu. She is completely surrendered and unswerving in devotion to the Lord. Her nature is *prema* and she rules over Gokula like a queen. One immediately attains the Lord by her mercy. Her *āvaraṇikā-śakti* is *mahāmāyā*, the controller of the material realm. By her influence all *jīvas* identify with their bodies and become bewildered. *Mahāmāyā* is also called Durgā, Eka or Ekānaṁśā."

kāryārthe: executing activities; There are two types of activities: those of *yogamāyā* and those of *māyā. Yogamāyā* came to the prison when Kṛṣṇa was born, transferred the seventh child from Devakī's womb, and put Yaśodā into deep sleep to exchange the two children. These are activities of *yogamāyā*, not *Mahāmāyā*. Mahāmāyā does not have the power to transfer her master Balarāma to another womb.

Yaśodā's sleep is not the work of Mahāmāyā because the scriptures say that beyond the fourth state of consciousness is the fifth state of *prema*. The dreaming of Kṛṣṇa's eternal associates occurs in the state of *prema*. Their sleep and dreaming are not caused by the modes of nature. *Mahāmāyā* cannot exert any influence over the eternal associates of the Lord.

The form of Devakī's daughter that Kaṁsa tried to kill was *Mahāmāyā* not *Yogamāyā*. Yogamāyā does not involve herself with such sinful people. Mahāmāyā slipped from Kaṁsa's hands, rose up in the sky, and then settled in many places with different names after saying, "I will be born from the womb of Yaśodā in Nanda's house in the twenty eighth *yuga* cycle at the end of Vaivasvata Manvantara. As a resident of Vindya Mountain, I will kill your evil companions."

The bewilderment of the husbands and mothers-in-law of the married *gopīs* joining the *rāsa-līla* was an action of Yogamāyā not Mahāmāyā because the husbands were not atheistic or unfavorable towards the Lord. If they were under the influence of Mahāmāyā, then one would certainly observe in them hostility towards the Lord.

The *Bhāgavatam*'s first verse describing Kṛṣṇa's *rāsa-līla* says *yoga-māyām upāśritaḥ:* "taking shelter of the internal spiritual energy." On the other hand, demons like Duryodhana and Śālva never gave respect to the Lord, even though they saw Kṛṣṇa's Viśvarūpa and Garuḍa carrier. They thought Kṛṣṇa was one of the wicked Yadavas. This is the action of Mahāmāyā not Yogamāyā, because their actions show hostility toward the Lord.

The bewilderment of the demons is the action of Mahāmāyā, and the bewilderment of the devotees is the action of Yogamāyā. When Yaśodā saw the universal form (*viśvarūpa*) in Kṛṣṇa's mouth, and when Nanda Mahārāja saw Kṛṣṇa in Varuṇaloka, they were completely unaffected by it because of their intense *vātsalya-bhāva* (parental affection), even though they saw such majestic aspects of the Lord. This is neither the action of Yogamāyā nor Mahāmāyā. It is the nature of *prema* itself.

Prema covers one's knowledge of the Lord's power and majesty (*aiśvarya mayi-jñāna*), and binds up Kṛṣṇa in the hearts of His *premi-bhaktas* more and more with the ropes of spiritual possessiveness. As affection for Kṛṣṇa increases, *prema* completely submerges the devotees in the great ocean of relishing Kṛṣṇa's sweetness. To convey this unique quality of *prema*, the *Tantra* says: "Kṛṣṇa spread his *vaiṣṇavī-māyā* in the form of parental affection." Extreme affection for a son is the unique quality of *vātsalya-prema*.

In this verse Yogamāyā is referred to as "*māyā*" since it shares the quality of spreading illusion with Mahāmāyā.

||10.1.26||

śrī-śuka uvāca

ity ādiśyāmara-gaṇān prajāpati-patir vibhuḥ

āśvāsya ca mahīṁ gīrbhiḥ sva-dhāma paramaṁ yayau

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: After thus advising the demigods and pacifying mother earth, the very powerful Lord Brahmā, who is the master of all other Prajāpatis and is therefore known as Prajāpati-pati, returned to his own abode, Brahmāloka.

COMMENTARY

Iti: thus; indicates that here the message of Viṣṇu as related by Brahmā to the demigods ends.

||10.1.27||

śūraseno yadupatir mathurām āvasan purīm

māthurāñ chūrasenāṁś ca viṣayān bubhuje purā

TRANSLATION

Formerly, Śūrasena, the chief of the Yadu dynasty, had gone to live in the city of Mathurā. There he enjoyed the places known as Māthura and Śūrasena.

COMMENTARY

mathurām: Now begins the description of Kṛṣṇa's appearance in Vasudeva's house in Mathurā. First the suitable place of His birth is described.

||10.1.28||

rājadhānī tataḥ sābhūt sarva-yādava-bhūbhujām

mathurā bhagavān yatra nityaṁ sannihito hariḥ

TRANSLATION

Since that time, the city of Mathurā had been the capital of all the kings of the Yadu dynasty. The city and district of Mathurā are very intimately connected with Kṛṣṇa, for Lord Kṛṣṇa lives there eternally.

COMMENTARY

ṇityaṁ sannihito: All perfect Kṛṣṇa is eternally present in His spiritual form in Mathurā in the material world. It is there that Kṛṣṇa appears and becomes visible to the people of the world. Kṛṣṇa does not descend from Vaikuṇṭha. But when Kṛṣṇa appears, His expansions from Vaikuṇṭha and Śvetadvīpa unite with Him. After the pastimes are over, they return to their respective abodes. That they descend from *Vaikuṇṭha* and later return there is mentioned in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (3.2.15): *parāvareśo mahad-aṁśa-yukto*.

||10.1.29||

tasyāṁ tu karhicic chaurir vasudevaḥ kṛtodvahaḥ

devakyā sūryayā sārdhaṁ prayāṇe ratham āruhat

TRANSLATION

Some time ago, Vasudeva, who belonged to the demigod family [or to the Śūra dynasty], married Devakī. After the marriage, he mounted his chariot to return home with his newly married wife.

COMMENTARY

Vasudeva mounted the chariot with his newly married wife (*sūryayā*) Devakī to go to his house (*prayāṇe*) the day after the marriage.

||10.1.30||

ugrasena-sutaḥ kaṁsaḥ svasuḥ priya-cikīrṣayā

raśmīn hayānāṁ jagrāha raukmai ratha-śatair vṛtaḥ

TRANSLATION

Kaṁsa, the son of King Ugrasena, in order to please his sister Devakī on the occasion of her marriage, took charge of the reins of the horses and became the chariot driver. He was surrounded by hundreds of golden chariots.

COMMENTARY

svasuḥ: In some editions, the word *svasuḥ* is replaced by *bhagnya*. Kaṁsa took the reins (*raśmīn*) of the horses in order to please his sister (*svasu* or *bhagnya*).

||10.1.31-32||

catuḥ-śataṁ pāribarhaṁ gajānāṁ hema-mālinām
aśvānām ayutaṁ sārdhaṁ rathānāṁ ca tri-ṣaṭ-śatam

dāsīnāṁ sukumārīṇāṁ dve śate samalaṅkṛte
duhitre devakaḥ prādād yāne duhitṛ-vatsalaḥ

TRANSLATION

Devakī's father, King Devaka, was very much affectionate to his daughter. Therefore, while she and her husband were leaving home, he gave her a dowry of four hundred elephants nicely decorated with golden garlands. He also gave

ten thousand horses, eighteen hundred chariots, and two hundred very beautiful young maid-servants, fully decorated with ornaments.

COMMENTARY

Pāribarhaṁ: dowry. *Yāne:* at the time of the journey.

||10.1.33||

śaṅkha-tūrya-mṛdaṅgāś ca nedur dundubhayaḥ samam

prayāṇa-prakrame tāta vara-vadhvoḥ sumaṅgalam

TRANSLATION

O beloved son, Mahārāja Parīkṣit, when the bride and bridegroom were ready to start, conchshells, bugles, drums and kettledrums all vibrated in concert for their auspicious departure.

||10.1.34||

pathi pragrahiṇaṁ kaṁsam ābhāṣyāhāśarīra-vāk

asyās tvām aṣṭamo garbho hantā yāṁ vahase ’budha

TRANSLATION

While Kaṁsa, controlling the reins of the horses, was driving the chariot along the way, an unembodied voice addressed him, “You foolish rascal, the eighth child of the woman you are carrying will kill you!”

COMMENTARY

āśarīra-vāk: While Kaṁsa held the reins of the horses in his hand, an unseen voice announced, “The eighth offspring of the woman you are carrying will kill you.”

Out of fear that Kṛṣṇa might not kill Kaṁsa because of his extreme affection for Devakī, the demigods delivered this message from the sky in order to arouse Kaṁsa’s anger toward Devakī. Vasudeva had heard from his mother that when he was born, there were sounds of drums announcing the future birth of an incarnation of the Lord. Vasudeva told this to Devakī. Thus hearing the voice from the sky, Devakī became blissful, for she understood that the Lord would appear in her womb. Also through the message it was

understood that the six sons of Marīci would be delivered from their curse after being killed by Kaṁsa. *garbho:* pregnancy; is used instead of *putra* (son), so that when Kaṁsa saw the eighth child to be a daughter he would not be suspicious.

||10.1.35||

ity uktaḥ sa khalaḥ pāpo bhojānāṁ kula-pāṁsanaḥ

bhaginīṁ hantum ārabdhaṁ khaḍga-pāṇiḥ kace ’grahīt

TRANSLATION

Kaṁsa was a condemned personality in the Bhoja dynasty because he was envious and sinful. Therefore, upon hearing this omen from the sky, he caught hold of his sister’s hair with his left hand and took up his sword with his right hand to sever her head from her body.

COMMENTARY

kula-pāṁsanaḥ: Kaṁsa, who contaminated his family with sin, prepared to kill Devakī. Out of affection for his sister, Kaṁsa held the reins of the horse with his left hand. Suddenly he grabbed Devakī’s hair in order to kill her. Throwing away the whip from his right hand, he took up his sword.

The affection of materialistic people is flickering and easily transforms into hate. They have no regard for religious principles. They are so shameless that even in the eyes of the common man they can commit murder.

||10.1.36||

taṁ jugupsita-karmāṇaṁ nṛśaṁsaṁ nirapatrapam
vasudevo mahā-bhāga uvāca parisāntvayan

TRANSLATION

Wanting to pacify Kaṁsa, who was so cruel and envious that he was shamelessly ready to kill his sister, the great soul Vasudeva, who was to be the father of Kṛṣṇa, spoke to him in the following words.

COMMENTARY

mahābhāga: greatly fortunate; Upon seeing that Kaṁsa was ready to kill his wife, Vasudeva did not show anger because he was an ocean of good qualities such as patience, gravity, forgiveness and cleverness. The question may arise, "How could a cruel person such as Kaṁsa listen to Vasudeva's advice?" Therefore he is described as *mahābhāga*. Even tigers and snakes do not create obstacles when they encounter those possessed of good qualities.

||10.1.37||

śrī-vasudeva uvāca

ślāghanīya-guṇaḥ śūrair bhavān bhoja-yaśaskaraḥ

sa kathaṁ bhaginīṁ hanyāt striyam udvāha-parvaṇi

TRANSLATION

Vasudeva said: My dear brother-in-law Kaṁsa, you are the pride of your family, the Bhoja dynasty, and great heroes praise your qualities. How could such a qualified person as you kill a woman, your own sister, especially on the occasion of her marriage?

COMMENTARY

Vasudeva used the diplomatic principles of *sāma*, pacification with kind words invoking relationship and glorification of qualities; *dāna*, personal gain and helping others; and *bheda*, creating dissension.

ślāghanīya guṇaḥ: one with praiseworthy qualities: glorifies Kaṁsa's qualities (*sāma*). *bhoja yaśaḥ-karaḥ:* a brilliant star in the Bhoja dynasty; invokes family relationship (*sāma*). *bhaginīm:* sister; by mentioning this word to invoke fear and doubt, Vasudeva employs dissension or *bheda*. *hanyāt striyam:* "How can you kill?" indicates gain and helping others (*dāna*). "Though Devakī bears your killer, you will gain fame by not killing her since she is a woman. Sparing her life, therefore, is helping others."

udvāha-parvaṇi: "Afterall, Devakī is a defenseless woman, your sister, and it will happen during her wedding. Presently you are a famous person, but killing her now will bring infamy in this life and hell in the next life."

Thus Vasudeva indicates two types of *bheda*, problems in this life and next. The real intent of Vasudeva's words can be understood by taking opposite meanings. Saying Kaṁsa has praiseworthy qualities, actually indicates that Kaṁsa does not have those

qualities. In the Bhoja dynasty Kaṁsa is famous for causing problems. By killing his sister Kaṁsa will destroy his dynasty.

||10.1.38||

mṛtyur janmavatāṁ vīra dehena saha jāyate

adya vābda-śatānte vā mṛtyur vai prāṇināṁ dhruvaḥ

TRANSLATION

O great hero, one who takes birth is sure to die; for death is born with the body. One may die today or after hundreds of years, but death is sure for every living entity.

COMMENTARY

Seeing no change in Kaṁsa's heart, Vasudeva tries logic to advise Kaṁsa.

"O king! Out of fear of death, you are about to commit murder. Now listen to me. Death is unavoidable." With this intention Vasudeva speaks this verse.

janmavatām: one who has taken birth; Factually there is no birth or death for the soul. Only those who take birth by accepting a material body have death. *saha:* "*Sa*" means it is well known. "*Ha*" indicates that the fact is definite. When will death take place? *vā:* either, or; Two "vas' are used to indicate the inability to predict the time of death. Death could come anytime between now and a hundred years.

mṛtyur vai prāṇināṁ dhruvaḥ: death is certain for all; Vasudeva presents proof by saying this, which resembles a verse in *Gītā* 2.27: *jātasya hi dhruvo mṛtyur, dhruvaṁ janma mṛtasya ca*, "For one who has taken his birth, death is certain; and for one who is dead, birth is certain."

"Therefore, O brave one, a courageous warrior like you should not be afraid of death."

||10.1.39||

dehe pañcatvam āpanne dehī karmānugo 'vaśaḥ

dehāntaram anuprāpya prāktanaṁ tyajate vapuḥ

TRANSLATION

When the present body turns to dust and is again reduced to five elements—earth, water, fire, air and ether—the proprietor of the body, the living being, automatically receives another body of material elements according to his fruitive activities. When the next body is obtained, he gives up the present body.

COMMENTARY

Birth means accepting a body and death means giving up a body. Both are inevitable. With that intention Vasudeva speaks this verse. When the body is about to die, one receives another body, and then gives up the old body. But one should not lament for the loss of enjoyment along with loss of the body.

Therefore Vasudeva says *karmanugaḥ... avaśaḥ* the new body is decided by one's actions in this life. "If you have *karma* to enjoy in the future, then certainly you will get that enjoyment. Therefore you should give up killing a woman, which will produce suffering in the next body."

||10.1.40||

vrajaṁs tiṣṭhan padaikena yathaivaikena gacchati

yathā tṛṇa-jalaukaivaṁ dehī karma-gatiṁ gataḥ

TRANSLATION

Just as a person traveling on the road rests one foot on the ground and then lifts the other, or as a worm on a vegetable transfers itself to one leaf and then gives up the previous one, the conditioned soul takes shelter of another body and then gives up the one he had before.

COMMENTARY

In this verse, Vasudeva gives examples to show how one gives up the present body after attaining the new body (in a subtle form via *karma*). A man puts his foot forward on the ground firmly and then withdraws his back leg from the ground and puts it forward. He does not put both feet forward at the same time.

However, in this example the feet are fixing themselves and withdrawing themselves from the same ground. As this may be unsatisfying to the mind, Vasudeva cites the example of the caterpillar, who after taking support of one blade of grass in front of him, gives up the previous blade of grass.

||10.1.41||

svapne yathā paśyati deham īdṛśaṁ manorathenābhiniviṣṭa-cetanaḥ

dṛṣṭa-śrutābhyāṁ manasānucintayan prapadyate tat kim api hy apasmṛtiḥ

TRANSLATION

Having experienced a situation by seeing or hearing about it, one contemplates and speculates about that situation, and thus one surrenders to it, not considering his present body. Similarly, by mental adjustments one dreams at night of living under different circumstances, in different bodies, and forgets his actual position. Under this same process, one gives up his present body and accepts another [tathā dehāntara-prāptiḥ [Bg. 2.13]].

COMMENTARY

Vasudeva now shows an example from everyday life. In a dream one sees a body similar to the one seen in the waking state (*īdṛśam*). Similarly, a person, whose consciousness is deeply absorbed in someone through seeing a king for example, or through hearing about Lord Indra for example, will see oneself as the king or Indra in his dream, and attempt to enjoy like the king or Indra as he forgets his original body.

||10.1.42||

yato yato dhāvati daiva-coditaṁ mano vikārātmakam āpa pañcasu

guṇeṣu māyā-raciteṣu dehy asau prapadyamānaḥ saha tena jāyate

TRANSLATION

At the time of death, according to the thinking, feeling and willing of the mind, which is involved in fruitive activities, one receives a particular body. In other words, the body develops according to the activities of the mind. Changes of body are due to the flickering of the mind, for otherwise the soul could remain in its original, spiritual body.

COMMENTARY

A question now arises. The mind can only enjoy because of the influence of the demigods over the mind. The demigods enable one to become absorbed in the image of a king or Indra. How is it possible for the mind to get enjoyment meant for someone else? This verse answers the question.

vikārātmakam: changing mentality; Whatever objects produced from the five elements (earth, water, air etc.) that the impressiona-ble mind becomes attracted to, those objects it attains. *dehy asau:* Because of its close association with the mind, the soul also enjoys those objects (*prapadyamānḥ jāyate*) along with the absorbed mind.

||10.1.43||

jyotir yathaivodaka-pārthiveṣv adaḥ samīra-vegānugataṁ vibhāvyate

evaṁ sva-māyā-raciteṣv asau pumān guṇeṣu rāgānugato vimuhyati

TRANSLATION

When the luminaries in the sky, such as the moon, the sun and the stars, are reflected in liquids like oil or water, they appear to be of different shapes—sometimes round, sometimes long, and so on—because of the movements of the wind. Similarly, when the living entity, the soul, is absorbed in materialistic thoughts, he accepts various manifestations as his own identity because of ignorance. In other words, one is bewildered by mental concoctions because of agitation from the material modes of nature.

COMMENTARY

Now Vasudeva gives an example to show how the soul, due to association with the mind, attains the same destination.

jyotir: sunlight or moonlight; *vodaka:* (*udaka*) refers to water, oil or ghee. The image of the sun is reflected on the surface of water, but it changes shape as the wind blows the surface and produces ripples. *guṇeṣu:* "In the bodies (*guṇeṣu*) created by the Lord's *māyā* (*svamāyā raciteṣu*), or by one's own ignorance, the living entity (*pumān*), following the mind which is filled with desires for enjoyment (*rāgānugata*), becomes bewildered and takes up the same desire for enjoyment.

Vasudeva said, “By killing Devakī you will obstruct the soul’s desire to enjoy. Even if you die, you will enjoy in the next body, because you will attain an auspicious body since your good deeds must bear result. But killing Devakī will bring you suffering in the future. Your death by the future son of Devakī, which was announced in the sky, is unavoidable as it is under the laws of *karma*. Therefore Kaṁsa, you should accept that death. All you can do is have Mārkaṇḍeya Ṛṣi perform some ceremonies as preventative measures.”

||10.1.44||

tasmān na kasyacid droham ācaret sa tathā-vidhaḥ

ātmanaḥ kṣemam anvicchan drogdhur vai parato bhayam

TRANSLATION

Therefore, since envious, impious activities cause a body in which one suffers in the next life, why should one act impiously? Considering one’s welfare, one should not envy anyone, for an envious person must always fear harm from his enemies, either in this life or in the next.

COMMENTARY

sa tathā-vidhaḥ: A person covered by ignorance should not commit violence. *drogdhur:* envious; For one who commits violence to others, there is fear of harm from Yamarāja and others (*parataḥ*). In this verse Vasudeva uses the diplomatic principle of *bheda* to instill fear in Kaṁsa.

||10.1.45||

eṣā tavānujā bālā kṛpaṇā putrikopamā

hantuṁ nārhasi kalyāṇīm imāṁ tvaṁ dīna-vatsalaḥ

TRANSLATION

As your younger sister, this poor girl Devakī is like your own daughter and deserves to be affectionately maintained. You are merciful, and therefore you should not kill her. Indeed, she deserves your affection.

COMMENTARY

Following the saying, “By praise the ferocious becomes tamed,” Vasudeva again began praising Kaṁsa.

putrikā upamā: daughter; “Devakī deserves your mercy because she is just like your daughter.” The sentence can also mean “Devakī is petrified like a doll out of fear.” *dīna vatsalaḥ:* “You should not kill her because you are compassionate to the suffering.” The real meaning of *dīna vatsalaḥ* however is “one who accepts even a calf from a most poor person as a tax.”

||10.1.46||

śrī-śuka uvāca

evaṁ sa sāmabhir bhedair bodhyamāno ’pi dāruṇaḥ

na nyavartata kauravya puruṣādān anuvrataḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: O best of the Kuru dynasty, Kaṁsa was fiercely cruel and was actually a follower of the Rākṣasas. Therefore he could be neither pacified nor terrified by the good instructions given by Vasudeva. He did not care about the results of sinful activities, either in this life or in the next.

COMMENTARY

bodhyamāno api: pacified; Though Kaṁsa was instructed by Vasudeva with pacifying and fear instilling words, because he kept company with *rākṣasas* (*puruṣa-adān,* man-eaters) he did not give up his intent to kill her.

||10.1.47||

nirbandhaṁ tasya taṁ jñātvā vicintyānakadundubhiḥ

prāptaṁ kālaṁ prativyoḍhum idaṁ tatrānvapadyata

TRANSLATION

When Vasudeva saw that Kaṁsa was determined to kill his sister Devakī, he thought to himself very deeply. Considering the imminent danger of death, he thought of another plan to stop Kaṁsa.

COMMENTARY

dundubhiḥ: "At my birth the demigods sounded drums (*dundubhi*). Therefore nothing unfortunate can happen to me." With this certainty Vasudeva, whose second name is Ānakadundubhi, thought of a way to avoid the imminent danger to Devakī.

||10.1.48||

mṛtyur buddhimatāpohyo yāvad buddhi-balodayam

yady asau na nivarteta nāparādho 'sti dehinaḥ

TRANSLATION

As long as he has intelligence and bodily strength, an intelligent person must try to avoid death. This is the duty of every embodied person. But if death cannot be avoided in spite of one's endeavors, a person facing death commits no offense.

COMMENTARY

yāvad buddhi: "As long as a person has power and intelligence, he will try to avoid death. I cannot use strength to avoid Devakī's death at Kaṁsa's hands, but I can use my intelligence." *asau:* death.

||10.1.49-50||

pradāya mṛtyave putrān mocaye kṛpaṇām imām

sutā me yadi jāyeran mṛtyur vā na mriyeta cet

viparyayo vā kiṁ na syād gatir dhātur duratyayā

upasthito nivarteta nivṛttaḥ punar āpatet

TRANSLATION

Vasudeva considered: By delivering all my sons to Kaṁsa, who is death personified, I shall save the life of Devakī. Perhaps Kaṁsa will die before my sons take birth, or, since he is already destined to die at the hands of my son, one of my sons may kill him. For the time being, let me promise to hand over my

sons so that Kaṁsa will give up this immediate threat, and if in due course of time Kaṁsa dies, I shall have nothing to fear.

COMMENTARY

Vasudeva silently speaks this verse: "This is what I will do. I will give my sons to this personification of death (*pradāya mṛtyave*), Kaṁsa."

But then Vasudeva thinks, "That is not proper." With this anxiety he continues to think. "If I don't have any sons there is no need to worry. If I have sons and Kaṁsa has not died by then, it is certainly improper. But I must save Devakī now. If Kaṁsa dies before that time, then there is no need to worry. Or the opposite may happen. If I give my sons to Kaṁsa, they may become strong and kill Kaṁsa. But how can infant sons kill strong Kaṁsa?

"The ways of the Lord are hard to understand but Providence (*dhātuḥ*) has proclaimed, 'The eighth child will kill Kaṁsa.' Therefore it is better to save Devakī from Kaṁsa's hands by promising to give the children to him, for Kaṁsa will also die."

||10.1.51||

agner yathā dāru-viyoga-yogayor adṛṣṭato 'nyan na nimittam asti

evaṁ hi jantor api durvibhāvyaḥ śarīra-saṁyoga-viyoga-hetuḥ

TRANSLATION

When a fire, for some unseen reason, leaps over one piece of wood and sets fire to the next, the reason is destiny. Similarly, when a living being accepts one kind of body and leaves aside another, there is no other reason than unseen destiny.

COMMENTARY

Vasudeva deliberates further: "What I have decided to do is not improbable, for no living entity can escape its fate (even Kaṁsa)." To illustrate this Vasudeva gives an example: "When there is a forest fire what causes the fire to burn one tree and not another? There is no other cause than fate. Just as the cause of the trees' suffering is fate, so the cause of person accepting and losing his body is fate alone. We cannot determine it with our intelligence."

||10.1.52||

evaṁ vimṛśya taṁ pāpaṁ yāvad-ātmani-darśanam

pūjayām āsa vai śaurir bahu-māna-puraḥsaram

TRANSLATION

After thus considering the matter as far as his knowledge would allow, Vasudeva submitted his proposal to the sinful Kaṁsa with great respect.

COMMENTARY

vimṛśya: contemplating; After carefully considering the options by using his intelligence to its full capacity to determine the correct path, Vasudeva began to praise the most sinful (*pāpaṁ*) Kaṁsa.

||10.1.53||

prāsanna-vadanāmbhojo nṛśaṁsaṁ nirapatrapam

manasā dūyamānena vihasann idam abravīt

TRANSLATION

Vasudeva's mind was full of anxiety because his wife was facing danger, but in order to please the cruel, shameless and sinful Kaṁsa, he externally smiled and spoke to him as follows.

COMMENTARY

vihasann: smiling externally; Vasudeva smiled externally to show Kaṁsa that he was internally satisfied, but factually he was suffering internally.

||10.1.54||

śrī-vasudeva uvāca

na hy asyās te bhayaṁ saumya yad vai sāhāśarīra-vāk

putrān samarpayiṣye 'syā yatas te bhayam utthitam

TRANSLATION

Vasudeva said: O best of the sober, you have nothing to fear from your sister Devakī because of what you have heard from the unseen omen. The cause of death will be her sons. Therefore I promise that when she gives birth to the sons from whom your fear has arisen, I shall deliver them all unto your hands.

COMMENTARY

āśarīr-vāk: unembodied voice; "According to the message heard in the sky, you need not fear Devakī, but her eighth child. Don't worry; I will give you all eight children. Then you can kill the eighth child, whom you fear, or if you wish you can kill all eight."

||10.1.55||

śrī-śuka uvāca

svasur vadhān nivavṛte kaṁsas tad-vākya-sāra-vit

vasudevo 'pi taṁ prītaḥ praśasya prāviśad gṛham

TRANSLATION

Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: Kaṁsa agreed to the logical arguments of Vasudeva, and, having full faith in Vasudeva's words, he refrained from killing his sister. Vasudeva, being pleased with Kaṁsa, pacified him further and entered his own house.

COMMENTARY

sāra-vit: essence of truth; Kaṁsa understood that Vasudeva was not lying.

praśasya: pacify; Vasudeva praised Kaṁsa by saying that his good character would spread throughout the universe.

||10.1.56||

atha kāla upāvṛtte devakī sarva-devatā

putrān prasuṣuve cāṣṭau kanyāṁ caivānuvatsaram

TRANSLATION

Each year thereafter, in due course of time, Devakī, the mother of God and all the demigods, gave birth to a child. Thus she bore eight sons, one after another, and a daughter named Subhadrā.

COMMENTARY

sarva devatā: all demigods; Devakī is described as *sarva-devata*, the mother of all the demigods, because she is worshipable as the mother of the Lord. *kanyāṁ:* daughter; Subhadrā is the daughter. Every year for eight years a son was born. The reason is given in verse fifty-eight.

||10.1.57||

kīrtimantaṁ prathamajaṁ kaṁsāyānakadundubhiḥ

arpayām āsa kṛcchreṇa so 'nṛtād ativihvalaḥ

TRANSLATION

Vasudeva was very much disturbed by fear of becoming a liar by breaking his promise. Thus with great pain he delivered his first-born son, named Kīrtimān, into the hands of Kaṁsa.

COMMENTARY

prathamajaṁ: first-born baby; It was the custom to name the child on the day of his birth. Thus on that day the first child was named Kīrtiman.

||10.1.58||

kiṁ duḥsahaṁ nu sādhūnāṁ viduṣāṁ kim apekṣitam

kim akāryaṁ kadaryāṇāṁ dustyajaṁ kiṁ dhṛtātmanām

TRANSLATION

What is painful for saintly persons who strictly adhere to the truth? How could there not be independence for pure devotees who know the Supreme Lord as the substance? What deeds are forbidden for persons of the lowest character? And what cannot be given up for the sake of Lord Kṛṣṇa by those who have fully surrendered at His lotus feet?

COMMENTARY

sādhūnām: saint; A question arises, “How can I, who am afraid to tell a lie (*sādhu*), tolerate the murder of my own son before my eyes?” Vasudeva gives the answer in this verse. Is it not intolerable for the *sādhu*? How could Vasudeva offer all the children, even without Kaṁsa ordering, instead of offering just the eighth child to Kaṁsa?

It is not reasonable that a householder be indifferent to his children. The next phrase therefore replies. Vasudeva is not ignorant like the normal person in the material world. For a person with knowledge, devotion and detachment like Vasudeva, is this to be expected? On the other hand, can Kaṁsa kill his child when he brings that child to him? Is there no mercy in his heart?

In answer to this Vasudeva said what can a wicked person not do?

In order to avoid fault, should Vasudeva give up householder *dharma* and not produce any children? Vasudeva answers: “He, who desires to see the Lord in the form of his son, holds the Lord in his heart (*dhṛta-ātmanām*), and remains in household life to bear a son. He should have affection for no other son. Let the eighth child be born quickly. Let me willingly offer up the other children year after year, and take responsibility for their death, out of eagerness to see the Lord.”

||10.1.59||

dṛṣṭvā samatvaṁ tac chaureḥ satye caiva vyavasthitim

kaṁsas tuṣṭa-manā rājan prahasann idam abravīt

TRANSLATION

My dear King Parīkṣit, when Kaṁsa saw that Vasudeva, being situated in truthfulness, was completely equipoised in giving him the child, he was very happy. Therefore, with a smiling face, he spoke as follows.

COMMENTARY

samatvaṁ: equipoised; Vasudeva was completely calm because he had no attachment to the son.

||10.1.60||

pratiyātu kumāro ’yaṁ na hy asmād asti me bhayam

aṣṭamād yuvayor garbhān mṛtyur me vihitaḥ kila

TRANSLATION

O Vasudeva, you may take back your child and go home. I have no fear of your first child. It is the eighth child of you and Devakī I am concerned with because that is the child by whom I am destined to be killed.

||10.1.61||

tatheti sutam ādāya yayāv ānakadundubhiḥ

nābhyanandata tad-vākyam asato 'vijitātmanaḥ

TRANSLATION

Vasudeva agreed and took his child back home, but because Kaṁsa had no character and no self-control, Vasudeva knew that he could not rely on Kaṁsa's word.

||10.1.62-63||

nandādyā ye vraje gopā yāś cāmīṣāṁ ca yoṣitaḥ

vṛṣṇayo vasudevādyā devaky-ādyā yadu-striyaḥ

sarve vai devatā-prāyā ubhayor api bhārata

jñātayo bandhu-suhṛdo ye ca kaṁsam anuvratāḥ

TRANSLATION

The inhabitants of Vṛndāvana, headed by Nanda Mahārāja and including his associate cowherd men and their wives, were none but denizens of the heavenly planets, O Mahārāja Parīkṣit, best of the descendants of Bharata, and so too were the descendants of the Vṛṣṇi dynasty, headed by Vasudeva, and Devakī and the other women of the dynasty of Yadu. The friends, relatives and well-wishers of both Nanda Mahārāja and Vasudeva and even those who externally appeared to be followers of Kaṁsa were all demigods.

COMMENTARY

These verses were spoken by Śukadeva Gosvāmī, or they can be taken as the words of Nārada to Kaṁsa. When Kaṁsa gave the child back to Devakī, Nārada could see that the

appearance of the Lord would be blocked. He therefore appeared to Kaṁsa at this time and spoke these words.

Nārada Muni came and spoke confidential words to Kaṁsa in these two verses for nine reasons: Nārada wanted to derive personal joy by seeing his Lord; to give joy to the demigods by provoking Kaṁsa to violence against the devotees and thereby hasten Lord's advent; to accomplish the slaying of Kaṁsa for his violence to the devotees; to shower himself in the intense devotion of Vasudeva and Devakī; and get their blessings by delivering to them a confirmation of Kṛṣṇa's appearance; to increase their eagerness to see the Lord; and to drown them in an ocean of bliss by cutting down their doubts of whether the Lord would really appear; to please Devakī and Vasudeva by making them blissful even in those circumstances of suffering; and to make Kaṁsa favorable to himself by presenting false friendship.

devatā-prāya: celestial inhabitants; means that though the demigods were born in the Yadu family, some demons were also born among them. *bhārata:* Kaṁsa is addressed as *bhārata* because *bhā* means desire in the mode of ignorance and *rata* means absorption. Kaṁsa was engrossed in enjoying in ignorance. (If it is Śukadeva speaking, *bhārata* refers to Parīkṣit.)

||10.1.64||

etat kaṁsāya bhagavāñ chaśaṁsābhyetya nāradaḥ

bhūmer bhārāyamāṇānāṁ daityānāṁ ca vadhodyamam

TRANSLATION

Once the great saint Nārada approached Kaṁsa and informed him of how the demoniac persons who were a great burden on the earth were going to be killed. Thus Kaṁsa was placed into great fear and doubt.

COMMENTARY

śaśaṁsa: inform; Nārada informed Kaṁsa how the demigods were appearing in various families.

||10.1.65-66||

ṛṣer vinirgame kaṁso yadūn matvā surān iti

devakyā garbha-sambhūtaṁ viṣṇuṁ ca sva-vadhaṁ prati

devakīṁ vasudevaṁ ca nigṛhya nigaḍair gṛhe

jātaṁ jātam ahan putraṁ tayor ajana-śaṅkayā

TRANSLATION

After the departure of the great saint Nārada, Kaṁsa thought that all the members of the Yadu dynasty were demigods and that any of the children born from the womb of Devakī might be Viṣṇu. Fearing his death, Kaṁsa arrested Vasudeva and Devakī and chained them with iron shackles. Suspecting each of the children to be Viṣṇu, Kaṁsa killed them one after another because of the prophecy that Viṣṇu would kill him.

COMMENTARY

Kaṁsa heard that Viṣṇu, who had been his enemy in a previous life, would now be born in the womb of Devakī and would kill him. Hearing from the mouth of Nārada, Kaṁsa believed this.

ajana: one who has no birth, Viṣṇu; Out of fear of Viṣṇu, Kaṁsa killed the children as soon as they were born.

||10.1.67||

mātaraṁ pitaraṁ bhrātṝn sarvāṁś ca suhṛdas tathā

ghnanti hy asutṛpo lubdhā rājānaḥ prāyaśo bhuvi

TRANSLATION

Kings greedy for sense gratification on this earth almost always kill their enemies indiscriminately. To satisfy their own whims, they may kill anyone, even their mothers, fathers, brothers or friends.

COMMENTARY

This was not a surprising action for evil men like Kaṁsa. That is the intention of this verse. What to speak of killing father, brothers and friends, they will kill even their own mothers. The order of seriousness is from first (mother) to last (friend).

||10.1.68||

ātmānam iha sañjātaṁ jānan prāg viṣṇunā hatam

mahāsuraṁ kālanemiṁ yadubhiḥ sa vyarudhyata

TRANSLATION

In his previous birth, Kaṁsa had been a great demon named Kālanemi and been killed by Viṣṇu. Upon learning this information from Nārada, Kaṁsa became envious of everyone connected with the Yadu dynasty.

COMMENTARY

Kaṁsa learned from Nārada that in his previous birth as Kālanemi he had been killed by Viṣṇu and was now reborn as Kaṁsa in Mathurā. Thus Kaṁsa made the Yadus his enemies.

||10.1.69||

ugrasenaṁ ca pitaraṁ yadu-bhojāndhakādhipam

svayaṁ nigṛhya bubhuje śūrasenān mahā-balaḥ

TRANSLATION

Kaṁsa, the most powerful son of Ugrasena, even imprisoned his own father, the King of the Yadu, Bhoja and Andhaka dynasties, and personally ruled the states known as Śūrasena.

COMMENTARY

śūrasena: indicates Mathurā, which is within Śūrasena. *bubhuje:* enjoyed; Thus the statement “He enjoyed Surasena” or that “Kaṁsa enjoyed ruling Mathurā and the surrounding lands.”

Thus ends the commentary on the First Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Two

Prayers by the Demigods

|| 10.2.1-2 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

pralamba-baka-cāṇūra-tṛṇāvarta-mahāśanaiḥ

muṣṭikāriṣṭa-dvivida-pūtanā-keśī-dhenukaiḥ

anyaiś cāsura-bhūpālair bāṇa-bhaumādibhir yutaḥ

yadūnāṁ kadanaṁ cakre balī māgadha-saṁśrayaḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Under the protection of Magadharāja, Jarāsandha, the powerful Kaṁsa began persecuting the kings of the Yadu dynasty. In this he had the cooperation of demons like Pralamba, Baka, Cāṇūra, Tṛṇāvarta, Aghāsura, Muṣṭika, Ariṣṭa, Dvivida, Pūtanā, Keśī, Dhenuka, Bāṇāsura, Narakāsura and many other demoniac kings on the surface of the earth.

COMMENTARY

Verses 1— 3: In the second chapter, Devakī's child is transferred to Rohiṇī by *yogamāyā*. Kṛṣṇa appears in Devakī's womb and the demigods praise the Lord. Kaṁsa's persecution of the Yadus, which was mentioned in the first chapter, is now described in detail. *mahāśanaiḥ:* big eater; means Aghāsura.

|| 10.2.3 ||

te pīḍitā niviviśuḥ kuru-pañcāla-kekayān

śālvān vidarbhān niṣadhān videhān kośalān api

TRANSLATION

Persecuted by the demoniac kings, the Yādavas left their own kingdom and entered various others, like those of the Kurus, Pañcālas, Kekayas, Śālvas, Vidarbhas, Niṣadhas, Videhas and Kośalas.

|| 10.2.4-5 ||

eke tam anurundhānā jñātayaḥ paryupāsate

hateṣu ṣaṭsu bāleṣu devakyā augraseninā

saptamo vaiṣṇavaṁ dhāma yam anantaṁ pracakṣate

garbho babhūva devakyā harṣa-śoka-vivardhanaḥ

TRANSLATION

Some of their relatives, however, began to follow Kaṁsa's principles and act in his service. After Kaṁsa, the son of Ugrasena, killed the six sons of Devakī, a plenary portion of Kṛṣṇa entered her womb as her seventh child, arousing her pleasure and her lamentation. That plenary portion is celebrated by great sages as Ananta, who belongs to Kṛṣṇa's second quadruple expansion.

COMMENTARY

paryupāsate: agree; Being eager to see the Lord, some of the Yadus such as Akrūra became cooperative with Kaṁsa and lived with him in Mathurā.

vaiṣṇavaṁ dhāma: plenary expansion of Viṣṇu; After Kaṁsa killed the first six children, the seventh appeared in Devakī's womb. He is famous as Ananta. What is His description? Ananta is described as *vaiṣṇavaṁ dhāma*, which means He is an *aṁśa*, part of Kṛṣṇa.

harṣa-śoka: joy and lamentation; Ananta's appearance in Devakī's womb was a cause of jubilation, but that He would be killed by Kaṁsa was a cause of lamentation.

|| 10.2.6 ||

bhagavān api viśvātmā viditvā kaṁsajaṁ bhayam

yadūnāṁ nija-nāthānāṁ yogamāyāṁ samādiśat

TRANSLATION

To protect the Yadus, His personal devotees, from Kaṁsa's attack, the Personality of Godhead, Viśvātmā, the Supreme Soul of everyone, ordered Yogamāyā as follows.

COMMENTARY

bhagavān: Kṛṣṇa, *svayam bhagavān*, gave orders to *yogamāyā*, who is the fifth of His nine spiritual energies headed by *vimalā*. [The nine *śaktis*, potencies, of the Lord are *vimalā, utkarṣiṇī, jñāna, kriyā, yogamāyā, prahvī, satyā, īsānā and anugrahā*.]

|| 10.2.7 ||

gaccha devi vrajaṁ bhadre gopa-gobhir alaṅkṛtam

rohiṇī vasudevasya bhāryāste nanda-gokule

anyāś ca kaṁsa-saṁvignā vivareṣu vasanti hi

TRANSLATION

The Lord ordered Yogamāyā: O My potency, who are worshipable for the entire world and whose nature is to bestow good fortune upon all living entities, go to Vraja, where there live many cowherd men and their wives. In that very beautiful land, where many cows reside, Rohiṇī, the wife of Vasudeva, is living at the home of Nanda Mahārāja. Other wives of Vasudeva are also living there incognito because of fear of Kaṁsa. Please go there.

COMMENTARY

After Devakī's six children were killed, Vasudeva, seeing Rohiṇī preg-nant, sent her secretly to Nanda Gokula. Out of fear of Kaṁsa (*kaṁsa saṁvignāḥ*) others lived in secret places (*vivareṣu*)—literally caves.

|| 10.2.8 ||

devakyā jaṭhare garbhaṁ śeṣākhyaṁ dhāma māmakam

tat sannikṛṣya rohiṇyā udare sanniveśaya

TRANSLATION

Within the womb of Devakī is My partial plenary expansion known as Saṅkarṣaṇa or Śeṣa. Without difficulty, transfer Him into the womb of Rohiṇī.

COMMENTARY

dhāma māmakam: means that Baladeva is My *aṁśa*, plenary portion, and Śeṣa is His portion. This is shown in verses such as SB 10.65.28: *rāma rāma mahā-bāho, na jāne tava vikramam, yasyaikāṁśena vidhṛtā, jagatī jagataḥ pate,* "Yāmuna-devi said, 'Rāma, Rāma, O mighty-armed one! I know nothing of Your prowess. With a single portion of Yourself You hold up the earth, O Lord of the universe.'" "Though Rohiṇī is the eternal mother of Balarāma, because of My (Kṛṣṇa) request, He appeared in Devakī's womb first. After establishing Śeṣa, His *aṁśa*, there as My bed and seat, He desired to go to the womb of His own mother."

How is it possible that six material children could appear first in the womb of Devakī, who is the internal spiritual energy of the transcendent Lord? Just as the material universes exist within the Supreme Lord but do not contaminate the Lord, the six children could exist within Devakī without contaminating her. This is proven in the *Gītā 9.2: mat-sthāni sarva-bhūtāni, na cāhaṁ teṣv avasthitaḥ,* "All beings are in Me, but I am not in them."

The conjunction of material and spiritual in Kṛṣṇa's pastimes is there to illustrate the methodical nature of *bhakti*. While devotees perform *sadhana bhakti* in the form of hearing and chanting about Kṛṣṇa, they also enjoy the six material sense objects, which is a secondary effect of *bhakti*. At that time, the devotee cries out pitifully, "Oh Kṛṣṇa! Because of this enjoyment I will fall into the dark well of material existence."

When a devotee shows fear of material enjoyment, gradually the tendency to enjoy matter subsides. Then *bhakti* in the form of hearing and chanting Kṛṣṇa's names, glorifying His transcendental forms, qualities and pastimes, and serving the Lord in various ways becomes prominent. Finally Kṛṣṇa Himself, the ocean of all wonderful forms and qualities, appears within the devotee.

Bhakti is *śuddha-sattva*, pure goodness, by nature and it directly manifests the Lord. The *Śruti* says: *bhaktir evainaṁ darśayati*, "Devotion makes the Lord reveal Himself." As it is

said that Marīci appeared from the mind, he can be considered the incarnation of the mind. Marīci's six children are the six objects of the senses: sound, touch, form, taste, smell, and thought.

Since Devakī possesses the power to make the Lord appear, she can be considered the incarnation of *bhakti*. Kaṁsa can be considered the incarnation of fear, as it is often said "out of fear of Kaṁsa." Just as fear of the material world removes the six sense objects from the womb of bhakti, so Kaṁsa destroyed the six children of Devakī. *Kṛṣṇa-prema*, which is characterized by intense service to the Lord, necessarily appears in the womb of *bhakti* after the desire for sense objects is extinguished. Similarly, Ananta, the personified form of service to the Lord, appeared as the seventh child of Devakī. As Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself appears after *prema-bhakti* appears, so Bhagavān Himself appeared as the eighth child of Devakī after Śeṣa appeared.

|| 10.2.9 ||

athāham aṁśa-bhāgena devakyāḥ putratāṁ śubhe

prāpsyāmi tvaṁ yaśodāyāṁ nanda-patnyāṁ bhaviṣyasi

TRANSLATION

O all-auspicious Yogamāyā, I shall then appear with My full six opulences as the son of Devakī, and you will appear as the daughter of mother Yaśodā, the queen of Mahārāja Nanda.

COMMENTARY

aṁśa-bhāgena: means that knowledge, strength and other secondary qualities (*aṁśa*) accompany (*bhaga* means *bhajana*) the Lord so that He manifests completely. This is Śrīdhara Swami's explanation of the words in *Bhavārtha Dīpikā*. He is perfect in whom all the parts (*aṁśa*) enter (*bhajana:praveṣa* which means entrance). Another meaning of the words is that *aṁśa* refers to Brahmā and all other servants and *bhāga* refers to auspiciousness. The Lord appears for the auspiciousness of Brahmā and others. These are the two meanings of Sanātana Gosvāmī in *Vaiṣṇava Toṣaṇī*.

Or another meaning is as follows. *Bhāga* means *aṁśa*, "I will appear in the mood of the son of Devakī as a plenary portion, partially manifesting Myself but not completely. Devakī will love Me only with *aiśvarya bhāva*, a loving mood of respect and majesty. Yaśodā, however, will manifest pure parental love (*śuddha-vatsalya-prema*) for Me, devoid of the restriction of *aiśvarya*.

bhaviṣyasi: “But Your Yogamāyā will simply appear from Yaśodā.” It is not mentioned that she will become the daughter of Yaśodā, though it is mentioned that Kṛṣṇa will become the son (*putratāṁ*) of Devakī. Yaśodā will not have affection for you as her daughter. This means that her presence in Vraja will not be noticed by anyone.

|| 10.2.10 ||

arciṣyanti manuṣyās tvāṁ sarva-kāma-vareśvarīm

dhūpopahāra-balibhiḥ sarva-kāma-vara-pradām

TRANSLATION

By sacrifices of animals, ordinary human beings will worship you gorgeously, with various paraphernalia, because you are supreme in fulfilling the material desires of everyone.

COMMENTARY

“Your *aṁśa*, material *māyā*, will be taken by Vasudeva to cheat Kaṁsa. You will be worshiped in various forms in Vindhyācala and other places. All men will worship these forms because you are the supreme (*varam*) goddess (*īśvarīm*) of those who have all types of material desires.”

|| 10.2.11-12 ||

nāmadheyāni kurvanti sthānāni ca narā bhuvi

durgeti bhadrakālīti vijayā vaiṣṇavīti ca

kumudā caṇḍikā kṛṣṇā mādhavī kanyaketi ca

māyā nārāyaṇīśānī śāradety ambiketi ca

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa blessed Māyādevī by saying: In different places on the surface of the earth, people will give you different names, such as Durgā, Bhadrakālī, Vijayā, Vaiṣṇavī, Kumudā, Caṇḍikā, Kṛṣṇā, Mādhavī, Kanyakā, Māyā, Nārāyaṇī, Īśānī, Śāradā and Ambikā.

COMMENTARY

kurvanti: give; “This word indicates in the future men will call you by various names. By My appearance on earth some men will become Vaiṣṇavas, and by your appearance others will become *śāktas*, worshipers of Durgā.”

|| 10.2.13 ||

garbha-saṅkarṣaṇāt taṁ vai prāhuḥ saṅkarṣaṇaṁ bhuvi

rāmeti loka-ramaṇād balabhadraṁ balocchrayāt

TRANSLATION

The son of Rohiṇī will also be celebrated as Saṅkarṣaṇa because of being sent from the womb of Devakī to the womb of Rohiṇī. He will be called Rāma because of His ability to please all the inhabitants of Gokula, and He will be known as Balabhadra because of His extensive physical strength.

COMMENTARY

“You will be called Rāma.” The word Balabhadra is a sahasup compound.

|| 10.2.14 ||

sandiṣṭaivaṁ bhagavatā tathety om iti tad-vacaḥ

pratigṛhya parikramya gāṁ gatā tat tathākarot

TRANSLATION

Thus instructed by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Yogamāyā immediately agreed. With the Vedic mantra oṁ, she confirmed that she would do what He asked. Thus having accepted the order of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, she circumambulated Him and started for the place on earth known as Nanda-gokula. There she did everything just as she had been told.

COMMENTARY

tathety om: Saying *tathā* and then *oṁ*, which is repetitive, is a sign of great respect for the Lord. Having accepted Kṛṣṇa’s words, Yogamāyā circumambulated the Lord and then went to the earth (*gām*).

|| 10.2.15 ||

garbhe praṇīte devakyā rohiṇīṁ yoga-nidrayā

aho visraṁsito garbha iti paurā vicukruśuḥ

TRANSLATION

When the child of Devakī was attracted and transferred into the womb of Rohiṇī by Yogamāyā, Devakī seemed to have a miscarriage. Thus all the inhabitants of the palace loudly lamented, "Alas, Devakī has lost her child!"

COMMENTARY

visraṁsitaḥ: lost; The citizens suspected that Kaṁsa must have done some black magic to cause the "apparent" miscarriage. *vicukruśuḥ:* lament; The citizens of Mathurā began to lament out of affection for Devakī.

|| 10.2.16 ||

bhagavān api viśvātmā bhaktānām abhayaṅkaraḥ

āviveśāṁśa-bhāgena mana ānakadundubheḥ

TRANSLATION

Thus the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is the Supersoul of all living entities and who vanquishes all the fear of His devotees, entered the mind of Vasudeva in full opulence.

COMMENTARY

viśvātmā: Supersoul all living entities; Kṛṣṇa is addressed as *viśvātmā*, the soul of the universe, because He is actually the object of *prema* for the whole universe. *aṁśa:* indicates that all the *avatāras* such as the *puruṣāvatāras* are included within Kṛṣṇa. *bhāga:* refers to the six opulences or all good qualities. Kṛṣṇa appeared in the mind of Vasudeva along with all His expansions and opulences. In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (3.2.15), it says: *parāvareśo mahad-aṁśa-yuktohy ajo 'pi jāto bhagavān yathāgnih*, "Although the Lord is unlimited and unborn, He took birth along with his *aṁśas*.

|| 10.2.17 ||

sa bibhrat pauruṣaṁ dhāma bhrājamāno yathā raviḥ

durāsado ’tidurdharṣo bhūtānāṁ sambabhūva ha

TRANSLATION

While carrying the form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead within the core of his heart, Vasudeva bore the Lord’s transcendentally illuminating effulgence, and thus he became as bright as the sun. He was therefore very difficult to see or approach through sensory perception. Indeed, he was unapproachable and unperceivable even for such formidable men as Kaṁsa, and not only for Kaṁsa but for all living entities.

COMMENTARY

bibhrat: carried; *pauruṣaṁ dhāma:* spiritual effulgence of the Supreme Person; means that the Vasudeva was holding the power (*dhāma*) of the Lord (*pauruṣam*). Or it can mean Vasudeva became effulgent on seeing the appearance of the Lord within himself. According to the *Viśvakośa* dictionary, *dhāma* means body, house, ray, place, birth and influence. *durāsadaḥ:* difficult to look at; means that other living entities could not approach him. *ati durdharṣaḥ:* difficult to approach; means that Kaṁsa and others could not possibly defeat Vasudeva.

|| 10.2.18 ||

tato jagan-maṅgalam acyutāṁśaṁ samāhitaṁ śūra-sutena devī

dadhāra sarvātmakam ātma-bhūtaṁ kāṣṭhā yathānanda-karaṁ manastaḥ

TRANSLATION

Thereafter, accompanied by plenary expansions, the fully opulent Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is all-auspicious for the entire universe, was transferred from the mind of Vasudeva to the mind of Devakī. Devakī, having thus been initiated by Vasudeva, became beautiful by carrying Lord Kṛṣṇa, the original consciousness for everyone, the cause of all causes, within the core of her heart, just as the east becomes beautiful by carrying the rising moon.

COMMENTARY

Lord Kṛṣṇa entered Devakī from Vasudeva. This is described in this verse.

jagan maṅgalam acyutāṁśam: who is the very form of auspiciousness for the whole universe; who does not deviate; and who includes all expansions such as Nārāyaṇa and Narasiṁha. *sarvātmakam ātma bhutaṁ: Sarva* refers to all the devotees or to Lord Śiva. *Ātma* refers to mind and *ka* means happiness. Thus the Lord is described as He who gives happiness to the minds of all the devotees or to Lord Śiva. *Ātma bhūtaṁ* means He appears (*bhūta*) on His own, independently (*ātma*). The Lord appeared in Devakī's mind without the effort that *yogis* exert to envision the Lord.

dadhāra manastaḥ: means Devakī held Kṛṣṇa with the mind. This phrase rules out material conception and birth. *kāṣṭhā:* east; A suitable example is given to support this. It was just like the eastern direction *(kāṣṭhā)* holding the full moon (*ānandakara*). It is understood that several days later Devakī could perceive Kṛṣṇa in her womb, because later in this chapter it is said, *diṣṭyamba te kuksi-gataḥ paraḥ pumān*, "Oh fortunate lady, the Supreme Lord has entered your womb." (v. 41)

|| 10.2.19 ||

sā devakī sarva-jagan-nivāsa-nivāsa-bhūtā nitarāṁ na reje

bhojendra-gehe 'gni-śikheva ruddhā sarasvatī jñāna-khale yathā satī

TRANSLATION

Devakī then kept within herself the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the cause of all causes, the foundation of the entire cosmos, but because she was under arrest in the house of Kaṁsa, she was like the flames of a fire covered by the walls of a pot, or like a person who has knowledge but cannot distribute it to the world for the benefit of human society.

COMMENTARY

Devakī became the shelter of the shelter of all material and non-material worlds, but all people could not take advantage of that bliss-giving form. Only a few close persons could appreciate her condition.

agni-śikheva ruddhā: covered fire; In the prison house of Kaṁsa (*bhojendra*) Devakī was like a covered fire. When a fire is burning in a house, it does not illuminate the town, but only the objects or persons near it in the house. However when the fire becomes strong it can burn down the restricting house. In this way, Devakī would in due time destroy Kaṁsa. *sarsvatī jñāna khale:* knowledge not distributed; Knowledge trapped in the hearts of men who do not distribute it (literally cheaters of knowledge), does not flourish

and benefit others. That knowledge will eventually destroy its restrictor, who is very sinful. In the same way, Devakī would destroy the offensive Kaṁsa.

|| 10.2.20 ||

tāṁ vīkṣya kaṁsaḥ prabhayājitāntarāṁ virocayantīṁ bhavanaṁ śuci-smitām

āhaiṣa me prāṇa-haro harir guhāṁ dhruvaṁ śrito yan na pureyam īdṛśī

TRANSLATION

Because the Supreme Personality of Godhead was within her womb, Devakī illuminated the entire atmosphere in the place where she was confined. Seeing her jubilant, pure and smiling, Kaṁsa thought, "The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Viṣṇu, who is now within her, will kill me. Devakī has never before looked so brilliant and jubilant."

COMMENTARY

Devakī, who was holding Viṣṇu within her womb (*ājitāntarāṁ*), filled the room with light. She smiled out of genuine bliss (*śuci smitām*), not in order to deceive Kaṁsa as previously. Seeing her, Kaṁsa then addressed her. *harir:* Viṣṇu; Hari can mean lion. Seeing Devakī, Kaṁsa thought, "Like the lion who kills (*prāṇaharī*) the elephant, Hari, who will take my life, has taken shelter in the womb of Devakī. Certainly this is so, because (*yat*) Devakī did not appear effulgent previously (*pureyam*).'"

|| 10.2.21 ||

kim adya tasmin karaṇīyam āśu me yad artha-tantro na vihanti vikramam

striyāḥ svasur gurumatyā vadho 'yaṁ yaśaḥ śriyaṁ hanty anukālam āyuḥ

TRANSLATION

Kaṁsa thought: What is my duty now? The Supreme Lord, who knows His purpose [paritrāṇāya sādhūnāṁ vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām Bg. 4.8], will not give up His prowess. Devakī is a woman, she is my sister, and moreover she is now pregnant. If I kill her, my reputation, opulence and duration of life will certainly be vanquished.

COMMENTARY

In this verse Kaṁsa speaks more clearly his intentions: “What should I do about Hari in this situation (*tasmin*)?” Is it proper to kill Him while He is still an embryo? No, because those interested in their own welfare (*artha tantra*) do not destroy their own good name. If I kill Him now, my reputation of prowess will be destroyed. But if He is born and grows, and then I fight with Him, whether I am victorious or defeated my glory will remain intact. Killing a child in the womb is not an act of bravery. Therefore, such a deed will not only destroy my fame, but *dharma* will also get destroyed.”

Thus Kaṁsa rightly thinks that by killing a woman, a sister and a fetus he will vanquish his fame, power and lifespan. This temporary restriction to Kaṁsa’s evil nature was due to fear. Thus Kaṁsa reflected upon his reputation through careful discrimination.

|| 10.2.22 ||

sa eṣa jīvan khalu sampareto varteta yo ’tyanta-nṛśaṁsitena

dehe mṛte taṁ manujāḥ śapanti gantā tamo ’ndhaṁ tanu-mānino dhruvam

TRANSLATION

A person who is very cruel is regarded as dead even while living, for while he is living or after his death, everyone condemns him. And after the death of a person in the bodily concept of life, he is undoubtedly transferred to the hell known as Andhatama.

COMMENTARY

Kaṁsa continues his deliberation: “If I kill the child to save my life, I will spend the rest of my life in misfortune. Those who perform cruel acts are dead even while existing within the body. If I commit cruel acts and die, people will curse me, and even while living they will curse me. I will fear even while alive. They will shout in taunting voices, ‘You should go to hell for this.’ Those who are absorbed in the bodily conception of life (*tanu māninah*), and maintain their bodies by committing violence on others will surely go to hell.”

|| 10.2.23 ||

iti ghoratamād bhāvāt sannivṛttaḥ svayaṁ prabhuḥ

āste pratīkṣaṁs taj-janma harer vairānubandha-kṛt

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Deliberating in this way, Kaṁsa, although determined to continue in enmity toward the Supreme Personality of Godhead, refrained from the vicious killing of his sister. He decided to wait until the Lord was born and then do what was needed.

|| 10.2.24 ||

āsīnaḥ saṁviśaṁs tiṣṭhan bhuñjānaḥ paryaṭan mahīm

cintayāno hṛṣīkeśam apaśyat tanmayaṁ jagat

TRANSLATION

While sitting on his throne or in his sitting room, while lying on his bed, or, indeed, while situated anywhere, and while eating, sleeping or walking, Kaṁsa saw only his enemy, the Supreme Lord, Hṛṣīkeśa. In other words, by thinking of his all-pervading enemy, Kaṁsa became unfavorably Kṛṣṇa conscious.

COMMENTARY

The absorption of Kaṁsa's mind in the Lord out of fear born of hatred is described in this verse.

saṁviśaṁs: lying on a bed; means while sleeping. *hṛṣīkeśam:* The Lord is called Hṛṣīkeśa, one who controls all the senses. *cintayāno:* always thinking badly; implies that Kaṁsa was continuously thinking of Hari, so that he saw Hari wherever he looked. Such a vision gives bliss in *prema*, but in fear it yields extreme distress. This is the difference between a devotee and an enemy seeing the Lord.

|| 10.2.25 ||

brahmā bhavaś ca tatraitya munibhir nāradādibhiḥ

devaiḥ sānucaraiḥ sākaṁ gīrbhir vṛṣaṇam aiḍayan

TRANSLATION

Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva, accompanied by great sages like Nārada, Devala and Vyāsa and by other demigods like Indra, Candra and Varuṇa, invisibly approached the room of Devakī, where they all joined in offering their respectful obeisances and prayers to please the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who can bestow blessings upon everyone.

COMMENTARY

vṛṣaṇam: the Lord who blesses all; This word refers to Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa who, like a cloud, rains the nectar of His pastimes. Brahmā acts as the chief cultivator in the field of the fourteen worlds. *bhavaś:* or Śiva is like the chief peacock with his tail feathers spread, fondly dancing before the rains. *nāradādibhiḥ:* Nārada and others (singers) are like *cātaka* birds, expressing great longing for the rains of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. *devaiḥ:* demigods; The demigods are like suffering elephants surrounded by the forest fire of Kaṁsa, Jarāsandha and other demons. All these demigods came to the prison house of Kaṁsa to glorify Lord Hari.

|| 10.2.26 ||

satya-vrataṁ satya-paraṁ tri-satyaṁ satyasya yoniṁ nihitaṁ ca satye

satyasya satyam ṛta-satya-netraṁ satyātmakaṁ tvāṁ śaraṇaṁ prapannāḥ

TRANSLATION

The demigods prayed: O Lord, You never deviate from Your vow, which is always perfect because whatever You decide is perfectly correct and cannot be stopped by anyone. Being present in the three phases of cosmic manifestation-creation, maintenance and annihilation—You are the Supreme Truth. Indeed, unless one is completely truthful, one cannot achieve Your favor, which therefore cannot be achieved by hypocrites. You are the active principle, the real truth, in all the ingredients of creation, and therefore you are known as antaryāmī, the inner force. You are equal to everyone, and Your instructions apply for everyone, for all time. You are the beginning of all truth. Therefore, offering our obeisances, we surrender unto You. Kindly give us protection.

COMMENTARY

"You Śrī Kṛṣṇa are the only truth in this world. You are understood by devotees but not by others." This is the meaning of the demigods' praise.

"You have made a vow to protect Your devotees, and that vow is upheld at all times. Therefore everyone should take shelter of You." This is the intention of the verse.

"We take shelter of You, whose vows are true." *Sakṛd eva prapanno yas, tavāsmīti ca yācate, abhayaṁ sarvadā tasmai, dadāmy etad vrataṁ mama*, "If one surrenders unto

Me sincerely, saying, ‘My Lord, from today I will fully surrendered unto You,’ I will always give him protection. That is My vow.” (*Rāmāyaṇa*, Yuddha-kāṇḍa 18.33)

“Unlike the temporary results obtained from the demigods, surrender to You is *satya paraṁ.” Satya* here means extending in all place and time, and *param* means the best. “We take shelter of You, who are the best in all time and space.”

Satyam can also refer to His name. “You are supreme and called *satya.” Satye pratisthitah kṛṣṇah satyam atra pratisthitam satyat satyo hi govindas tasmat satyo hi namatah*, “Kṛṣṇa is established in truth and truth is established in Kṛṣṇa.” (*Udyama Parva*) Govinda is more truthful than truth itself. Therefore He is called *satya*.” Kṛṣṇa’s intelligence, strength and all His transcendental qualities are also truth.

“The three śaktis of Kṛṣṇa (*jnana, bala, kriya*) take shelter of You. Therefore You are called *tri satyam*.” The *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.8 says*, na tasya kāryaṁ karaṇaṁ ca vidyate na tat samaś cābh yadhikaś ca dṛśyate parāsya śaktir vividhaiva srūyate svābhāvikī jñāna -bala-kriyā ca,* “The Supreme Personality of Godhead does not need to do anything personally, for He has such potencies that anything He wants done will be done perfectly well through the control of material nature (*svābhāvikī jñāna -bala-kriyā ca*).”

satyasya yoni: The *aṁśas* of Kṛṣṇa are also *satya*. “We take shelter of You, the source of all *avatāras* such as Matsya, Kūrma and other eternally true forms.” *nihitam:* entered; “We take shelter of You who are present in *satya*, that is Mathurā, Vaikuṇṭha and other spiritual abodes. You are the essence of the essence, the cream of all spiritual objects, *satyasya satyam*.” Or the material world is one *satya* or real thing, but existing only temporarily. “You are the cause of the material world, but You exist in all time, eternally. Therefore You are the *satya* of all *satyas*, the truth of all truths.”

This is similar to the phrase in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (4.4.18): *prāṇasya prāṇam uta cakṣuṣaś cakṣur uta śrotrasya śrotram annasyānnaṁ manaso ye mano viduḥ*, “The Supreme Truth is understood to be the life air sustaining everyone’s life air, the vision of everyone’s eyes, the hearing power of the ear, and the sustenance of food itself.” In his commentary on *Vedanta-sūtra*, Srīla Madhvācārya has confirmed this by quoting the following statement from the Vedic *śruti-mantras*: *satyaṁ hy evedaṁ viśvam asṛjata,* “This universe, created by the Lord, is real.”

satya netra: “O, form of eternal truth! We surrender unto You who are endowed with all senses headed by the eyes. We surrender to You who are the real form of truth, *satyātmakaṁ*.”

|| 10.2.27 ||

ekāyano 'sau dvi-phalas tri-mūlaś catū-rāsaḥ pañca-vidhaḥ ṣaḍ-ātmā

sapta-tvag aṣṭa-viṭapo navākṣo daśa-cchadī dvi-khago hy ādi-vṛkṣaḥ

TRANSLATION

The body [the total body and the individual body are of the same composition] may figuratively be called "the original tree." From this tree, which fully depends on the ground of material nature, come two kinds of fruit—the enjoyment of happiness and the suffering of distress. The cause of the tree, forming its three roots, is association with the three modes of material nature—goodness, passion and ignorance. The fruits of bodily happiness have four tastes—religiosity, economic development, sense gratification and liberation—which are experienced through five senses for acquiring knowledge in the midst of six circumstances: lamentation, illusion, old age, death, hunger and thirst. The seven layers of bark covering the tree are skin, blood, muscle, fat, bone, marrow and semen, and the eight branches of the tree are the five gross and three subtle elements—earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence and false ego. The tree of the body has nine hollows—the eyes, the ears, the nostrils, the mouth, the rectum and the genitals—and ten leaves, the ten airs passing through the body. In this tree of the body there are two birds: one is the individual soul, and the other is the Supersoul.

COMMENTARY

The Lord then asks a question: "If I, who am endowed with body, senses and *dhama,* am *satya* then is the material world *asatya*, false?"

The demigods answer: "The world is true, but subject to destruction in time, whereas You are not destroyed by time. You are indestructible." With this intention the demigods recite this verse.

ekāyanah: means that *prakṛti*, the material nature, is the one shelter of the tree of the material world. There are two fruits of the tree of the material world: happiness and misery. There are three roots of the tree: *sattva, raja and tama*, goodness, passion and ignorance. There are four *rasas*, namely the four *varṇas* and *āśramas*. There are five types of knowledge gathered from the five senses. There are six natural qualities (*ātma*) of the tree known as the six whirlpools: lamentation, illusion, old age, death, hunger and

thirst. There are seven coverings of the tree: skin, flesh, blood, fat, bone, marrow and semen.

There are eight branches (*viṭapa*): the five gross elements, mind, intelligence and false ego. There are nine holes in the tree: the holes in the body such as two eyes, two nostrils, two ears, mouth, rectum and genital. There are ten leaves: the ten life airs. There are two birds in the tree, the *jīva* and the Lord.

|| 10.2.28 ||

tvam eka evāsya sataḥ prasūtis tvaṁ sannidhānaṁ tvam anugrahaś ca

tvan-māyayā saṁvṛta-cetasas tvāṁ paśyanti nānā na vipaścito ye

TRANSLATION

The efficient cause of this material world, manifested with its many varieties as the original tree, is You, O Lord. You are also the maintainer of this material world, and after annihilation You are the one in whom everything is conserved. Those who are covered by Your external energy cannot see You behind this manifestation, but theirs is not the vision of learned devotees.

COMMENTARY

"This tree arises from Your energies." With this intention the verse is spoken. "You are the only (*eka*) creator of this material tree which is real (*sat*). You are the annihilator (*sannidhānaṁ*) and the maintainer (*anugrha*)."

Kṛṣṇa replied, "Oh devas! It is said that Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva are the masters of this world, so why do you say that I am the creator?"

The next statement of the demigods answers this question: "Those whose minds are covered by Your *māyā* see Brahmā and others as independent. Those whose minds are not covered see only You, and see Brahmā and others as Your expansions only."

|| 10.2.29 ||

bibharṣi rūpāṇy avabodha ātmā kṣemāya lokasya carācarasya

sattvopapannāni sukhāvahāni satām abhadrāṇi muhuḥ khalānām

TRANSLATION

O Lord, You are always in full knowledge, and to bring all good fortune to all living entities, You appear in different incarnations, all of them transcendental to the material creation. When You appear in these incarnations, You are pleasing to the pious and religious devotees, but for nondevotees You are the annihilator.

COMMENTARY

In this verse the demigods explain that Lord Kṛṣṇa has many *avatāras* such as Matsya and Kūrma.

avabodhah: awake; means Kṛṣṇa has a form of pure knowledge.

sattvopapannāni: all the incarnations of Kṛṣṇa are transcendental, pure *sattva*.

khalānām: They destroy the wicked and protect the devoted (*satām*).

|| 10.2.30 ||

tvayy ambujākṣākhila-sattva-dhāmni samādhināveśita-cetasaike

tvat-pāda-potena mahat-kṛtena kurvanti govatsa-padaṁ bhavābdhim

TRANSLATION

O lotus-eyed Lord, by concentrating one's meditation on Your lotus feet, which are the reservoir of all existence, and by accepting those lotus feet as the boat by which to cross the ocean of nescience, one follows in the footsteps of mahājanas [great saints, sages and devotees]. By this simple process, one can cross the ocean of nescience as easily as one steps over the hoofprint of a calf.

COMMENTARY

The previous verse spoke of the protection of the Lord. This verse describes the form of protection.

ākhila sattvam: means *śuddha sattva* or without material qualities.

dhāmni: cause of all existence; “The men of discrimination, who meditate on Your name, form qualities and pastimes when You appear in this world, board the boat of Your lotus feet and cross over the material ocean. For such great devotees, crossing the ocean of material existence becomes as easy as stepping over the hoof-print of a calf. They are not even aware of its existence.”

|| 10.2.31 ||

svayaṁ samuttīrya sudustaraṁ dyuman
bhavārṇavaṁ bhīmam adabhra-sauhṛdāḥ

bhavat-padāmbhoruha-nāvam atra te

nidhāya yātāḥ sad-anugraho bhavān

TRANSLATION

O Lord, who resemble the shining sun, You are always ready to fulfill the desire of Your devotee, and therefore You are known as a desire tree [vāñchā-kalpataru]. When ācāryas completely take shelter under Your lotus feet in order to cross the fierce ocean of nescience, they leave behind on earth the method by which they cross, and because You are very merciful to Your other devotees, You accept this method to help them.

COMMENTARY

svayaṁ: personally; indicates that the material ocean is difficult to cross for others, but no trouble at all for the devotees.

dyuman: The Lord is addressed as *dyuman*, the sun. This infers that those within whom the sun of Kṛṣṇa does not remain in the terrible material ocean of insurmountable darkness. “When You shine on the sunrise mountain of *prema-bhakti*, all darkness automatically disappears. Then easily one can cross the ocean of material existence.”

nāvam atra te nidhāya: Leaving the boat on the bank means that the devotees establish *bhakti* movements and then cross the ocean of material existence. By this act, others are able to cross over the ocean of repeated birth and death. Though the material influence gets completely destroyed, the devotees remain here. This is only an expression of humility in the devotees. For them, the material world is compared to the water in a calf’s hoof-print, because the water in the calf’s hoof-print is actually purifying and praiseworthy. In the same way, the devotee’s impression that he is caught in *saṁsāra* purifies the devotee of the disease of false identification and is therefore praiseworthy.

sad-anugraho bhavān: How are the devotees able to cross the ocean of birth and death? Because You, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, (*bhavan*) are merciful (*anugrahah*) to the devotees (*sat*) and not to others.

|| 10.2.32 ||

ye 'nye 'ravindākṣa vimukta-māninas
tvayy asta-bhāvād aviśuddha-buddhayaḥ

āruhya kṛcchreṇa paraṁ padaṁ tataḥ
patanty adho 'nādṛta-yuṣmad-aṅghrayaḥ

TRANSLATION

[Someone may say that aside from devotees, who always seek shelter at the Lord's lotus feet, there are those who are not devotees but who have accepted different processes for attaining salvation. What happens to them? In answer to this question, Lord Brahmā and the other demigods said:] O lotus-eyed Lord, although nondevotees who accept severe austerities and penances to achieve the highest position may think themselves liberated, their intelligence is impure. They fall down from their position of imagined superiority because they have no regard for Your lotus feet.

COMMENTARY

For Vaiṣṇavas, the ocean of material existence is no bigger than the water in a calf's hoof-print. But for *jñānis* who do not accept the spiritual form of the Lord, the material ocean is very difficult to cross. The following scriptural statements support this conclusion: Sanat-kumāra said in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (4.22.40), *kṛcchro mahāniha bhavārṇavam aplaveśāṁ, sad-varga-nakram asukhena titīrṣanti, tat tvaṁ harer bhagavato bhajanīyam aṅghriṁ, kṛtvoḍupaṁ vyasanam uttara dustarārṇam*: "The ocean of nescience is very difficult to cross because it is infested with many dangerous sharks. Although those who are non-devotees undergo severe austerities and penances to cross that ocean, we recommend that you simply take shelter of the lotus feet of the Lord, which are like boats for crossing the ocean. Although the ocean is difficult to cross, by taking shelter of His lotus feet you will overcome all dangers."

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* 12.5, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself says, *kleśo 'dhikataras teṣām, avyaktāsakta-cetasām, avyaktā hi gatir duḥkhaṁ, dehavadbhir avāpyate*: "For those whose minds are attached to the unmanifested, impersonal feature of the Supreme,

advancement is very troublesome. To make progress in that discipline is always difficult for those who are embodied."

Nārada says, *naiṣkarmyam apy acyuta-bhāva-varjitaṁ, na śobhate jñānam alam nirañjanam*: "Knowledge of self-realization, even though free from all material affinity, does not look well if devoid of a conception of the Infallible [God]." (SB 1.5.12)

The demigods here make a similar statement: "Oh lotus-eyed Lord, those (*anye*) who do not accept You have no realization of Your sweetness and merciful glance. They think themselves liberated, *vimukti māninah*, though they are completely bound in the material world. This is different from Your devotees, who though liberated, out of humility regard themselves as conditioned."

asta bhāvād: speculation without knowing Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet; This means because of a lack (*a-sta*) of affection (*bhāva*) for the Lord, they think Him to be illusory. As *Gītā* 9.11 says, *avajānanti māṁ mūḍhā mānuṣīṁ tanum āśritam*: "Only the fools regard Me as an ordinary person." *aviśuddha buddhayaḥ:* impure intelligence; Because of such foolishness they are called *aviśuddha buddhayaḥ*. The *jñānīs* are not *viśuddha*, really pure, though they have purified their hearts by controlling lust and other material urges. *kṛcchreṇa:* However by cultivation of the knowledge generated from such painful practices such as austerity and sense control (*kṛcchṛena*), the *jñānīs* can attain liberation (*paraṁ padaṁ*). It should be understood however, that even the *jñānīs* must possess some mixed *bhakti*, for without that they cannot attain even liberation in this life.

Lord Brahmā prays, *śreyaḥ-sṛtiṁ bhaktim udasya te vibho, kliśyanti ye kevala-bodha-labdhaye*, "My dear Lord, devotional service unto You is the best path for self-realization. If someone gives up that path and engages in the cultivation of speculative knowledge (*jñāna*), he will simply undergo a troublesome process and will not achieve his desired result." (SB 10.14.4)

patanti adaḥ: fall down; Without *bhakti* the goal of *jñāna* becomes like a mirage, and eventually the *jñāni* falls down into material existence again. *anādṛta aṇghrayaḥ:* neglecting Your lotus feet; If *jñānīs* have some type of *bhakti*, how do they fall down? They fall because they think Your lotus feet are material, and therefore do not respect them.

There are two types of *bhakti* practiced as a limb of *jñāna*. The *jñānīs* practice *bhakti* a little bit, because the scriptures say that *jñāna* cannot be perfected without the touch of *bhakti*. For example, some *jñānīs* worship the deity, but they take it is an illusory form and thus worship with disrespect. Others simply worship because of material attachment, without disrespect. The first type adopt extreme austerities, and after a long time when *bhakti* bestows knowledge to destroy their ignorance and establishes them on the *Brahmā bhūta* platform (liberated state), they stop their practices of *bhakti*. These *jñānīs* are falsely liberated (*vimukti māninah*). They cannot be called *jīvan mukta*, truly liberated souls.

According to Śrī Kṛṣṇa's statement in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.14.21), *bhaktyāham ekayā grāhyaḥ*: "Only by executing devotional service can one appreciate Me." Because of the absence of *bhakti* and the presence of offenses, the *jñānīs* do not attain the direct association of the Lord. Therefore, the burned up seeds of their *karma* again begin to sprout, and such *jñānīs* fall into the material world again.

An example of this is given in the *Viṣṇu-bhakti-candrodaya* concerning Ratha-yatra: "Even though a person may have burned up all his *karmas* with the fire of knowledge, if out of illusion he does not follow the Lord during Ratha-yatra, he will become *brahma-rākṣasa*." The *Vasana-bhāsya* says: "Even a *jīvan mukta* (liberated soul) if he offends the Lord, who is full of inconceivable energies, will fall into the bondage of *karma* again."

The *bhakti* of the second type of *jñāni* brings one to the *brahma bhūta* platform also, and it extinguishes both knowledge and ignorance. But *bhakti* does not become extinguished. That type of *jñāni* attains the status of *jīvan mukta* and achieves a direct meeting with the Lord. Such a person is described in the *Bhagavad-gītā* 18.54: *brahma-bhūtaḥ prāsannātmā na śocati na kāṅkṣati*, "One who is transcendentally situated at once realizes the Supreme Brahman and becomes fully joyful." And in *Bhagavad-gītā* 18.55: *bhaktyā mām abhijānāti yāvān yaś cāsmi tattvataḥ*, "Only persons engaged in devotional service can factually know the transcendental position of the Lord."

|| 10.2.33 ||

tathā na te mādhava tāvakāḥ kvacid
bhraśyanti mārgāt tvayi baddha-sauhṛdāḥ

tvayābhiguptā vicaranti nirbhayā

vināyakānīkapa-mūrdhasu prabho

TRANSLATION

O Mādhava, Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord of the goddess of fortune, if devotees completely in love with You sometimes fall from the path of devotion, they do not fall like nondevotees, for You still protect them. Thus they fearlessly traverse the heads of their opponents and continue to progress in devotional service.

COMMENTARY

"Bharata, Indradyumna and Citraketu, who were great devotees, are not criticized even though they fell. Then why do the *jñānīs* get criticized so heavily?" This verse answers the question. The devotees on the path of *bhakti* do not fall like the pretenders of liberation—what to speak of giving up the Lord's lotus feet. Even if *bhaktas* fall, in that state they remain firmly attached to Your lotus feet. Though Citraketu, Bharata and Indradyumna fell and took the bodies of demons like Vṛtā and others, their *prema* increased a hundred fold.

One should see their fall-down as a cause for increasing *prema*. Their fall is not like the fall of the aspirants for liberation, for even in the fallen state they remain firmly attached to Your feet. They remain faithful to the Lord, thinking that their fall has been arranged by the Lord for their own benefit; for the Lord promises that His devotee will never perish. Being thus convinced of Kṛṣṇa's protection, they tread over the heads of the demigods causing obstacles. In other words, they conquer over all obstacles. Another meaning can be that the devotees hold on their own heads the feet of the Lord which destroy all obstacles.

|| 10.2.34 ||

sattvaṁ viśuddhaṁ śrayate bhavān sthitau śarīriṇāṁ śreya-upāyanaṁ vapuḥ

veda-kriyā-yoga-tapaḥ-samādhibhis tavārhaṇaṁ yena janaḥ samīhate

TRANSLATION

O Lord, during the time of maintenance You manifest several incarnations, all with transcendental bodies, beyond the material modes of nature. When You appear in this way, You bestow all good fortune upon the living entities by teaching them to perform Vedic activities such as ritualistic ceremonies, mystic yoga, austerities, penances, and ultimately samādhi, ecstatic absorption in thoughts of You. Thus You are worshiped by the Vedic principles.

COMMENTARY

In verse 29 there was mention of the Lord's pure forms appearing in the world of moving and non-moving entities. That verse says that the purpose of the Lord's

appearance is to help the devotees. In verse 30-33 the purity of *bhakti* has been mentioned. In verse 32, there is the hint that by attachment to the Lord's feet the devotee also attains liberation as a secondary result. This shows that the real purpose of the Lord's appearance in the world is to establish *bhakti*.

viśuddha: transcendental; indicates that *sattva* is beyond material contamination. "You accept a purely spiritual body." "And what type of form is it?" *sthitau:* maintenance; "In maintaining the world, You accept a body which brings about benefit (*upāyana*) and supreme auspiciousness (*śreya*) for the living entities." "What is that benefit?" *veda kriyā yoga tapasa samādhi: Brahmacārīs* study the *Vedas*. *Grhasthas* perform *kriya yoga*. *Vanaprasthas* perform austerities and sannyasis sit in samadhi.

ārhaṇaṁ samīhate: Men worship You through their activities in these four *āśramas*. Your appearance creates this benefit. If one does not accept Your spiritual form he cannot attain perfection.

|| 10.2.35 ||

sattvaṁ na ced dhātar idaṁ nijaṁ bhaved vijñānam ajñāna-bhidāpamārjanam

guṇa-prakāśair anumīyate bhavān prakāśate yasya ca yena vā guṇaḥ

TRANSLATION

O Lord, cause of all causes, if Your transcendental body were not beyond the modes of material nature, one could not understand the difference between matter and transcendence. Only by Your presence can one understand the transcendental nature of Your Lordship, who are the controller of material nature. Your transcendental nature is very difficult to understand unless one is influenced by the presence of Your transcendental form.

COMMENTARY

"Some people conclude that My form is material *sattva guṇa*." This verse is spoken to answer this challenge.

idam: this; The demigods point at the womb of Devakī with an index finger and say, "Oh Lord! If this form of Yours was material *sattva* and not *nijam sattvam* or *suddha sattva* (beyond material contamination), then there would be an absence (*mārjanam apa*) of devotees realizing Your spiritual form."

vijñānam: transcendental knowledge; “The realization of the devotees is the proof of the Lord’s spiritual form. What do they realize? By realizing that Your body is completely spiritual, material bondage (*ajñāna*) gets extinguished (*bhidā*).

“One should have no doubt about the reality of their realization. There is also more evidence about the Lord’s spiritual form. By the strong influence of Your qualities, the manifestation of Your mercy in the form of *prema (guṇa prakāsaiḥ),* and Your grace appearing in our minds, we must conclude that Your body is not material.”

prakāśate yasya guṇaḥ: reveal Your qualities; “Those qualities manifest from a person possessing spiritual nature, not from matter. It is You who have those qualities. There must be some person to manifest those qualities, for matter alone cannot do that.”

yena vā: by which, either; “It is by the agency of *suddha sattva* that these qualities must manifest, not by the agency of matter.”

Another meaning is this: “If Your *suddha sattva* body were never to manifest, then the realization which destroys ignorance would not take place. If Your body were material, then You could be inferred by the use of material intelligence (*guna prakāśaih*). He who possesses matter, and by whose intelligence matter manifests would be called the Lord.”

|| 10.2.36 ||

na nāma-rūpe guṇa-janma-karmabhir nirūpitavye tava tasya sākṣiṇaḥ

mano-vacobhyām anumeya-vartmano deva kriyāyāṁ pratiyanty athāpi hi

TRANSLATION

O Lord, Your transcendental name and form are not ascertained by those who merely speculate on the path of imagination. Your name, form and attributes can be ascertained only through devotional service.

COMMENTARY

“Not only Your form is *suddha sattva* but also Your name. Your transcendental name and form can be realized only by devotion. There is no other way.” Thus this verse is spoken.

guṇa: attributes; refers to Kṛṣṇa’s beautiful form and merciful glance.

karma: pastimes; refers to lifting Govardhana Hill, and artistically standing in a three-fold bending pose. *janma:* appearance; refers to Kṛṣṇa's role as the son of Nanda and Vasudeva.

"Even by chanting Your name or meditating on Your form, the casual observer (*sākṣiṇaḥ*) cannot discern or realize Your sweetness, nor perceive Your qualities, birth and activities. If one fails to realize the sweetness of Your name or form, he has not attained any realization at all. It is like those afflicted with jaundice: though chewing sugar candy, they cannot taste the sweetness. Similarly, those devoid of devotion cannot realize the sweetness of Your name and form. Therefore, Your name and form must also be *suddha sattva*, purely spiritual."

sākṣiṇaḥ: can also refer to the Supreme Lord, the supreme witness.

"Because Your name and form are part of Your spiritual nature, those pursuing the path of speculation (*anumeya-vartmano*) cannot know Your true form. However, if one serves You by hearing and chanting Your names with devotion (*kriyāyāṁ*), he will directly realize Your spiritual name and form. This can be inferred through the mind and words of the devotee."

mano-vacobhyām: mind and words; "By mind (*mano*) the pure qualities of tolerance and humility are inferred. The word (*vacobhyām*) means utterances steeped in devotion, such as *mano'ravindaksa didrksaye tvam*. *vartmanah:* path; means of the person who has attained *prema-bhakti*.

|| 10.2.37 ||

śṛṇvan gṛṇan saṁsmarayaṁś ca cintayan nāmāni rūpāṇi ca maṅgalāni te

kriyāsu yas tvac-caraṇāravindayor āviṣṭa-cetā na bhavāya kalpate

TRANSLATION

Even while engaged in various activities, devotees whose minds are completely absorbed at Your lotus feet, and who constantly hear, chant, contemplate and cause others to remember Your transcendental names and forms, are always on the transcendental platform, and thus they can understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

COMMENTARY

This verse points out that practice of hearing, glorifying and remembering the name and form of the Lord is the means for realization of the Lord.

kriyāsu: engaged in devotional service; This word indicates that even in the midst of matters relating to one's material body, the devotee is not affected by the material world, but remains deeply absorbed in the happiness of his realization of the Lord.

|| 10.2.38 ||

diṣṭyā hare 'syā bhavataḥ pado bhuvo

bhāro 'panītas tava janmaneśituḥ

diṣṭyāṅkitāṁ tvat-padakaiḥ suśobhanair
drakṣyāma gāṁ dyāṁ ca tavānukampitām

TRANSLATION

O Lord, we are fortunate because the heavy burden of the demons upon this earth is immediately removed by Your appearance. Indeed, we are certainly fortunate, for we shall be able to see upon this earth and in the heavenly planets the marks of lotus, conchshell, club and disc that adorn Your lotus feet.

COMMENTARY

In this verse the demigods hint at the Lord's purpose of relieving the earth's burden.

pada: place; means coming from the feet as the *Śruti* says, *padbhyam bhumi*, "The earth arose from the Lord's feet."

"The burden of the earth, which arose from Your feet, has been removed. We have understood that Kaṁsa, Jarāsandha and others have been killed just by Your appearance. *padakaiḥ:* lotus feet; means very tender feet, and *suśobhanaih* means marked with the flag and thunderbolt. *Gām* means earth and *dyām* means Svarga, heaven. "We are fortunate to see the earth and heaven mercifully marked with Your tender lotus feet."

|| 10.2.39 ||

na te 'bhavasyeśa bhavasya kāraṇaṁ

vinā vinodaṁ bata tarkayāmahe

bhavo nirodhaḥ sthitir apy avidyayā

kṛtā yatas tvayy abhayāśrayātmani

TRANSLATION

O Supreme Lord, You are not an ordinary living entity appearing in this material world as a result of fruitive activities. Therefore Your appearance or birth in this world has no other cause than Your pleasure potency. Similarly, the living entities, who are part of You, have no cause for miseries like birth, death and old age, except when these living entities are conducted by Your external energy.

COMMENTARY

"We have said that You have appeared for protecting us, but that is only a pretense. You perform Your birth and activities independently for Your own purpose. Though You are unborn (*abhavasya*), You appear in the world. We cannot determine the cause because (*yataḥ*) the creation, maintenance and destruction (*bhavo nirodhah sthitih*) are carried out by *māyā* (*avidyayā*), which takes shelter of You (*tvayi āśrayātmani*)."

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is called *abhaya* or instilling fearlessness, because by remembering Him the fear of the demons like Kaṁsa disappears. Therefore there is no necessity of the Lord personally appearing to kill Kaṁsa.

|| 10.2.40 ||

matsyāśva-kacchapa-nṛsiṁha-varāha-haṁsa-

rājanya-vipra-vibudheṣu kṛtāvatāraḥ

tvaṁ pāsi nas tri-bhuvanaṁ ca yathādhuneśa

bhāraṁ bhuvo hara yadūttama vandanaṁ te

TRANSLATION

O supreme controller, Your Lordship previously accepted incarnations as a fish, a horse, a tortoise, Narasiṁhadeva, a boar, a swan, Lord Rāmacandra, Paraśurāma and, among the demigods, Vāmanadeva, to protect the entire world by Your mercy. Now please protect us again by Your mercy by diminishing the

disturbances in this world. O Kṛṣṇa, best of the Yadus, we respectfully offer our obeisances unto You.

COMMENTARY

"Please put aside all our talks of suffering caused by our fickle minds. Previously You protected us by taking various forms, so now do the same to remove the burden of the earth. That will be the same as protecting us."

Speaking thus, the demigods then touched their heads to the earth in respect.

|| 10.2.41 ||

diṣṭyāmba te kukṣi-gataḥ paraḥ pumān aṁśena sākṣād bhagavān bhavāya naḥ

mābhūd bhayaṁ bhoja-pater mumūrṣor goptā yadūnāṁ bhavitā tavātmajaḥ

TRANSLATION

O mother Devakī, by your good fortune and ours, the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself, with all His plenary portions, such as Baladeva, is now within your womb. Therefore you need not fear Kaṁsa, who has decided to be killed by the Lord. Your eternal son, Kṛṣṇa, will be the protector of the entire Yadu dynasty.

COMMENTARY

To console Devakī, the demigods now praise her. "Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa has appeared in your womb along with Baladeva (*aṁśena*)." Or it can mean, "The Lord (*sākṣāt bhagavān*), whose *aṁśa* is the *paraḥ pumān*, and who glances over *prakṛti* has appeared now in your womb."

bhavāya: means for auspiciousness. "The Lord, whose part is Maha-Viṣṇu, has appeared in your womb to bestow auspiciousness on us."

|| 10.2.42 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

ity abhiṣṭūya puruṣaṁ yad-rūpam anidaṁ yathā

brahmeśānau purodhāya devāḥ pratiyayur divam

TRANSLATION

After thus offering prayers to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Viṣṇu, the Transcendence, all the demigods, with Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva before them, returned to their homes in the heavenly planets.

COMMENTARY

anidaṁ: means non-material, transcendental. *purodhāya:* keep in front; After praising the Lord whose form is transcendental, the demigods, thinking that Brahmā and Śiva would see some wonderful pastimes that they would miss, kept Brahmā and Śiva in front and then departed for the heavenly abodes.

Thus ends the commentary on the Second Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Three

The Birth of Lord Kṛṣṇa

|| 10.3.1-5 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

atha sarva-guṇopetaḥ kālaḥ parama-śobhanaḥ

yarhy evājana-janmarkṣaṁ śāntarkṣa-graha-tārakam

diśaḥ prasedur gaganaṁ nirmaloḍu-gaṇodayam

mahī maṅgala-bhūyiṣṭha-pura-grāma-vrajākarā

nadyaḥ prāsanna-salilā hradā jalaruha-śriyaḥ

dvijāli-kula-sannāda-stavakā vana-rājayaḥ

vavau vāyuḥ sukha-sparśaḥ puṇya-gandhavahaḥ śuciḥ

agnayaś ca dvijātīnāṁ śāntās tatra samindhata

manāṁsy āsan prāsannāni sādhūnām asura-druhām

jāyamāne ’jane tasmin nedur dundubhayaḥ samam

TRANSLATION

Thereafter, at the auspicious time for the appearance of the Lord, the entire universe was surcharged with all the qualities of goodness, beauty and peace. The constellation Rohiṇī appeared, as did stars like Aśvinī. The sun, the moon and the other stars and planets were very peaceful. All directions appeared extremely pleasing, and the beautiful stars twinkled in the cloudless sky. Decorated with towns, villages, mines and pasturing grounds, the earth seemed all-auspicious. The rivers flowed with clear water, and the lakes and vast reservoirs, full of lilies and lotuses, were extraordinarily beautiful. In the trees and green plants, full of flowers and leaves, pleasing to the eyes, birds like cuckoos and swarms of bees began chanting with sweet voices for the sake of the demigods. A pure breeze began to blow, pleasing the sense of touch and bearing the aroma of flowers, and when the brāhmaṇas engaging in ritualistic ceremonies ignited their fires according to Vedic principles, the fires burned steadily, undisturbed by the breeze. Thus when the birthless Lord Viṣṇu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, was about to appear, the saints and brāhmaṇas, who had always been disturbed by demons like Kaṁsa and his men, felt peace within the core of their hearts, and kettledrums simultaneously vibrated from the upper planetary system.

COMMENTARY

In this chapter, there is a description of the time and place becoming jubilant for Kṛṣṇa's appearance, a description of the Lord's advent, and the prayers of Vasudeva and Devakī.

Verse 1: When (*yarhi*) the birth constellation (*janma ṛkṣaṁ*) of the Lord who has no birth (*ajanma*) arrived, time itself became endowed with all good qualities.

ājana janma: can also be taken as the name of the *nakṣatra*, constellation. *Ājana* means Viṣṇu. *Ājana janma* means he who is born from Viṣṇu; that is Prajapati. Prajapati's *nakṣatra* is Rohiṇī. The name of the *nakṣatra* is not mentioned directly because the scriptures enjoin that the birth *nakṣatra* of a person should not be named directly. At this time also the other *nakṣatras* such as Aśvinī, the planets such as the sun and the stars all assumed a peaceful state.

Verse 2: This verse describes how the directions (*diśaḥ*) assumed all good qualities. In this verse the qualities of the autumn season are described even though it was rainy season, because all the elements such as the earth, water, fire, air and ether were jubilant. The joy above is indicated by the phrase "the stars shone brilliantly in the sky." The joy on earth is expressed next in the description of the towns, cities and mines.

Verse 3: The joy between earth and sky is expressed in two verses beginning with a description of the water (*prāsanna salilā*). The lotus usually blooms during the day and closes at night, but now the lotus bloomed in the night (*jalaruha śriyaḥ*). Night assumed the qualities of the day. The forest resounded with the cries of cuckoos and humming of bees (*dvijāli kula sanñāda*), and was resplendent with leaves and flowers.

Verse 4: Though it was monsoon season, spring's qualities are described next. The wind (*vavau vāyuḥ*), which had the coolness of spring's breezes (*sukha sparśaḥ*), was dust-free (*śuciḥ*) and laden with the fragrance of spring flowers (*puṇya gandha*). Though the fires had almost all been extinguished (*śāntās*), they now blazed (*samindhata*), turning to the right.

Verse 5: Though it was *Dvāpara-yuga*, the quality of *Tretā-yuga* now manifested. *Manāmsi* (minds) indicates that the mind, intelligence, senses, sense objects, and five gross elements all become joyful. Though previously afflicted by the harassment of the demons, the devotees' minds, intellects, senses and bodies now became joyful. The devotees rejoiced over the upcoming appearance (*jāyamāne*) of Viṣṇu, the unborn.

|| 10.3.6 ||

jaguḥ kinnara-gandharvās tuṣṭuvuḥ siddha-cāraṇāḥ

vidyādharyaś ca nanṛtur apsarobhiḥ samaṁ mudā

TRANSLATION

The Kinnaras and Gandharvas began to sing auspicious songs, the Siddhas and Cāraṇas offered auspicious prayers, and the Vidyādharīs, along with the Apsarās, began to dance in jubilation.

|| 10.3.7-8 ||

mumucur munayo devāḥ sumanāṁsi mudānvitāḥ

mandaṁ mandaṁ jaladharā jagarjur anusāgaram

niśīthe tama-udbhūte jāyamāne janārdane

devakyāṁ deva-rūpiṇyāṁ viṣṇuḥ sarva-guhā-śayaḥ

āvirāsīd yathā prācyāṁ diśīndur iva puṣkalaḥ

TRANSLATION

The demigods and great saintly persons showered flowers in a joyous mood, and clouds gathered in the sky and very mildly thundered, making sounds like those of the ocean's waves. Then the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Viṣṇu, who is situated in the core of everyone's heart, appeared from the heart of Devakī in the dense darkness of night, like the full moon rising on the eastern horizon, because Devakī was of the same category as Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

anusāgaram: following the ocean; This means the clouds imitated the roaring of the ocean. But previously it was stated that all directions were overjoyed, and the sky was cloud free and filled with stars. How could there be rumbling of clouds?

tama udbhute: densely dark; Therefore, it is described that deep in the night, everything became covered in darkness. There was thunder at that time because thick clouds covered the sky after six hours of night. *janārdane:* The Lord is addressed as Janārdana because He is being requested (*ardana*) by the devotees, *munis* and demigods (*jana*): "Oh Lord, now is the time for Your birth."

Then the time came for Kṛṣṇa's birth from the womb of Devakī, whose eternal body was full of knowledge and bliss (*deva rupinyam*) like Lord Viṣṇu, who sleeps in the heart of all souls (*sarva guhā śay ah*), and who eternally resides in *Mathurā* and *Vaikuṇṭha*, invisible to the common man, like an inaccessible cave in a mountain. Kṛṣṇa's birth was not painful like a normal child.

induḥ iva: full moon; Kṛṣṇa appeared like the full moon rising in the eastern sky. The subject of the simile (moon) began to act out the role at that time. Though it was the eighth day of waning at the time, the moon thought in bliss, "The Lord is ornamenting our dynasty with His birth in this world." Then it became round like the full moon.

puṣkalaḥ: complete in every respect; In this way also Viṣṇu appeared in His full form as *svayaṁ bhagavān* Śrī Kṛṣṇa, along with all His *aṁśās*. According to *Hari-vaṁśa*, the birth took place in the eighth month of pregnancy, before the expected time, in order to bewilder Kaṁsa. In the *Kha Manikya,* an astrological work, Kṛṣṇa's birth is described: The Moon, Mars, Mercury and Saturn were exalted and Taurus was ascendant. Jupiter was in Pisces, Sun was in Leo, Venus in Libra and Rāhu in Scorpio. At midnight, on Wednesday with the moon in the Rohiṇī nakṣatra, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa appeared.

|| 10.3.9-10 ||

tam adbhutaṁ bālakam ambujekṣaṇaṁ

catur-bhujaṁ śaṅkha-gadādy-udāyudham

śrīvatsa-lakṣmaṁ gala-śobhi-kaustubhaṁ

pītāmbaraṁ sāndra-payoda-saubhagam

mahārha-vaidūrya-kirīṭa-kuṇḍala-

tviṣā pariṣvakta-sahasra-kuntalam

uddāma-kāñcy-aṅgada-kaṅkaṇādibhir

virocamānaṁ vasudeva aikṣata

TRANSLATION

Vasudeva then saw the newborn child, who had very wonderful lotuslike eyes and who bore in His four hands the four weapons śaṅkha, cakra, gadā and padma. On His chest was the mark of Śrīvatsa and on His neck the brilliant Kaustubha gem. Dressed in yellow, His body blackish like a dense cloud, His scattered hair fully grown, and His helmet and earrings sparkling uncommonly with the valuable gem Vaidūrya, the child, decorated with a brilliant belt, armlets, bangles and other ornaments, appeared very wonderful.

COMMENTARY

Verses nine and ten describe the astonishing child that Vasudeva saw; listing the features of astonishment. Baby Kṛṣṇa appeared with lotus eyes, four arms holding conch and club. *vaidūrya:* refers to a jewel which shines blue, yellow and red. The Lord wore a triangular-shaped crown studded with *vaidūrya* gems.

|| 10.3.11 ||

sa vismayotphulla-vilocano hariṁ sutaṁ vilokyānakadundubhis tadā

kṛṣṇāvatārotsava-sambhramo ’spṛśan mudā dvijebhyo ’yutam āpluto gavām

TRANSLATION

When Vasudeva saw his extraordinary son, his eyes were struck with wonder. In transcendental jubilation, he mentally collected ten thousand cows and distributed them among the brāhmaṇas as a transcendental festival.

COMMENTARY

What was Vasudeva's wonder?

1. "With my material eyes I am seeing that form, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is rarely seen by liberated souls. Besides being bound by ignorance as a soul, I am also bound externally in the prison of Kaṁsa."
2. "Although He is the supreme transcendence, the Lord has appeared from the womb of Devakī."
3. "When the child came out of the womb, all of His limbs were nicely ornamented with weapons, cloth, belt, earrings and crown."
4. "The Supreme Lord, whom fear itself fears, has taken me as a father out of fear."

The Lord is addressed as Hari (God) and *suta* (son) because simultaneously Vasudeva knew Him to be the Lord and his son. "On the birth of an ordinary child, a father will celebrate with charity and meditation. What should I do in this condition, when the Lord is born as my son?" Thinking like this respectfully and filled with joy (*mudā*), Vasudeva submerged (*āpluta*) in an ocean of bliss, and gave cows in charity to *brāhmaṇas* in his mind (*aspṛśat*, without touching)

|| 10.3.12 ||

athainam astaud avadhārya pūruṣaṁ

paraṁ natāṅgaḥ kṛta-dhīḥ kṛtāñjaliḥ

sva-rociṣā bhārata sūtikā-gṛhaṁ

virocayantaṁ gata-bhīḥ prabhāva-vit

TRANSLATION

O Mahārāja Parīkṣit, descendant of King Bharata, Vasudeva could understand that this child was the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Nārāyaṇa. Having concluded this without a doubt, he became fearless. Bowing down with folded hands and concentrating his attention, he began to offer prayers to the child, who illuminated His birthplace by His natural influence.

COMMENTARY

Fixing his mind on the Lord (*kṛta-dhīḥ*), Vasudeva thought of Lord Kṛṣṇa with reverence as God and affection as his son. Though out of parental love he was afraid his tender

child might be harmed by Kaṁsa's weapons, that fear vanished when he realized that his child was the Supreme Lord (*gata-bhīḥ prabhāva-vit*).

|| 10.3.13 ||

śrī-vasudeva uvāca

vidito 'si bhavān sākṣāt puruṣaḥ prakṛteḥ paraḥ

kevalānubhavānanda-svarūpaḥ sarva-buddhi-dṛk

TRANSLATION

Vasudeva said: My Lord, You are the Supreme Person, beyond material existence, and You are the Supersoul. Your form can be perceived by transcendental knowledge, by which You can be understood as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. I now understand Your position perfectly.

COMMENTARY

"Your intention in showing this form is as follows: 'My father is worried about Me because of Kaṁsa, therefore I will make him fearless by showing him that I am God.' "Accordingly, I have become fearless on understanding that You are God." With this understanding Vasudeva speaks this verse.

"I can understand that You are the Supreme Person, Kāraṇodakśāyī Viṣṇu, who activates the material nature by His glance. You are the soul of Brahman realization. You are the all-pervading Supersoul (*satva buddhi ḍrk*). You are all these things because You are directly *svayam bhagavān*."

|| 10.3.14 ||

sa eva svaprakṛtyedaṁ sṛṣṭvāgre tri-guṇātmakam

tad anu tvaṁ hy apraviṣṭaḥ praviṣṭa iva bhāvyase

TRANSLATION

My Lord, You are the same person who in the beginning created this material world by His personal external energy. After the creation of this world of three guṇas [sattva, rajas and tamas], You appear to have entered it, although in fact You have not.

COMMENTARY

“O father, you know that I have been born with limitation in your house. But do you know the truth about Me?”

To destroy this doubt, Vasudeva expresses his realization.

sa eva: means “That form of Yours about which I previously spoke, that is You.”

“You create this universe by Your material energy and seem to enter and not enter it simultaneously. Because You are seen inside the universe, we cannot say that You do not enter. Because You are seen outside the universe, we cannot say You do not enter there. You seemed to have entered my house, as You are also present everywhere. You appear to have been born, but we cannot say that either because You are always existing. Thus I know that Kaṁsa cannot do anything to You, who are all-pervading.”

|| 10.3.15-17 ||

yatheme ’vikṛtā bhāvās tathā te vikṛtaiḥ saha

nānā-vīryāḥ pṛthag-bhūtā virājaṁ janayanti hi

sannipatya samutpādya dṛśyante ’nugatā iva

prāg eva vidyamānatvān na teṣām iha sambhavaḥ

evaṁ bhavān buddhy-anumeya-lakṣaṇair
grāhyair guṇaiḥ sann api tad-guṇāgrahaḥ

anāvṛtatvād bahir antaraṁ na te

sarvasya sarvātmana ātma-vastunaḥ

TRANSLATION

The mahat-tattva, the total material energy, is undivided, but because of the material modes of nature, it appears to separate into earth, water, fire, air and ether. Because of the living energy [jīva-bhūta], these separated energies combine to make the cosmic manifestation visible, but in fact, before the creation of the cosmos, the total energy is already present. Therefore, the total

material energy never actually enters the creation. Similarly, although You are perceived by our senses because of Your presence, You cannot be perceived by the senses, nor experienced by the mind or words [avāṅ-mānasa-gocara]. With our senses we can perceive some things, but not everything; for example, we can use our eyes to see, but not to taste. Consequently, You are beyond perception by the senses. Although in touch with the modes of material nature, You are unaffected by them. You are the prime factor in everything, the all-pervading, undivided Supersoul. For You, therefore, there is no external or internal. You never entered the womb of Devakī; rather, You existed there already.

COMMENTARY

This verse gives an example. "You enter into Devakī's womb just like the undifferentiated *mahat-tattva* and other elements (*ime*) enter the universe but do not enter it, or appear to be created but actually are not. Though You appear to be born, You are not. The *maha-tattva*, possessing within it various distinct elements such as earth, joins with consciousness to create the material universe. Though the elements appear to have entered into the creation (*anugata iva*), because they remain present outside as well, one cannot say they have entered. Though the elements appear to arise within the universe, they actually existed before the universe."

Verse 17: "The elements are touched by the three modes of nature, but as the supreme cause of everything You are not touched by the modes of nature, though You enter into the universe. Though You are perceived as full of qualities which can be understood by the intelligence, You, being full of bliss, do not accept the qualities of matter, whose essence is suffering.

"Why? Because You are not covered by the three modes of material nature. Those who are covered by the material modes of nature take on those qualities. The modes of nature, however, never contaminate You internally or externally. The living entity however, upon contacting the objects of sound and touch externally, internally experiences lamentation and illusion.

"You, who pervade everything as the Paramātma (*sarvātmana*), and all the objects related to You in the spiritual world (*ātma vastunaḥ*), such as the devotee, Your abode and pastimes are forever untouched by matter."

|| 10.3.18 ||

ya ātmano dṛśya-guṇeṣu sann iti vyavasyate sva-vyatirekato 'budhaḥ

vinānuvādaṁ na ca tan manīṣitaṁ samyag yatas tyaktam upādadat pumān

TRANSLATION

One who considers his visible body, which is a product of the three modes of nature, to be independent of the soul is unaware of the basis of existence, and therefore he is a rascal. Those who are learned have rejected his conclusion because one can understand through full discussion that with no basis in soul, the visible body and senses would be insubstantial. Nonetheless, although his conclusion has been rejected, a foolish person considers it a reality.

COMMENTARY

“But can the three modes of material nature bestow some sort of happiness?” This verse gives the answer.

“He is foolish and unintelligent who thinks that the objects seen such as a woman, a flower garland and tasty food are enjoyable. In reality, these objects give misery, lamentation and illusion since they can only be possessed temporarily. They keep one trapped in the cycle of repeated birth and death.

“The *karma-mīmāṁsakas* conclude that wealth and possessions are the most valuable things and think themselves intelligent. Their arguments are not without rebuttal. They don’t have true wisdom. What the devotee rejects with scorn, they accept with eagerness.”

|| 10.3.19 ||

tvatto ’sya janma-sthiti-saṁyamān vibho

vadanty anīhād aguṇād avikriyāt

tvayīśvare brahmaṇi no virudhyate

tvad-āśrayatvād upācāryate guṇaiḥ

TRANSLATION

O my Lord, learned Vedic scholars conclude that the creation, maintenance and annihilation of the entire cosmic manifestation are performed by You, who are free from endeavor, unaffected by the modes of material nature, and changeless in Your spiritual situation. There are no contradictions in You, who are the

Supreme Personality of Godhead, ParaBrahman. Because the three modes of material nature—sattva, rajas and tamas—are under Your control, everything takes place automatically.

COMMENTARY

"From Your statements that You are the creator through *prakrti*, it is understood that *prakṛti* is Your energy and non-different from You. Although You are the cause of the universe, You never contact the material *guṇas* either internally or externally. How is that possible?"

This verse answers the question. "O Lord, the *Śruti* says that creation, maintenance and destruction of the universe arise from You, who are without action, quality and change. But how can the creator be inactive? Though You are Brahmā and Śiva, the creator and destroyer, at the same time You are without action (*anīhā*).

"Indeed, You are the reservoir of contradictory qualities. How? Because You are the shelter of the material modes of nature, the actions of creation and destruction are ascribed to You. Though *prakṛti* is Your energy, it is Your external energy. It is not Your *svarūpa* or *svabhāva*, personal form. Thus You are not in contact with the *gunas* internally or externally."

This conclusion is established here. Or a second meaning is, "How can my [Vasudeva] son be Brahmā and Śiva? Actually You are not Brahmā or Śiva, but You are the shelter of both. You say this Yourself in the *Bhagavad-gītā* 14.27: *brahmāṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham*, 'I am the basis of the impersonal Brahman.'"

"Lord Brahmā says in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (2.6.42): *ādyo'vatāraḥ puruṣaḥ parasya*... 'Kāraṇārṇavaśāyī Viṣṇu is the first incarnation of the Supreme Lord, and He is the master of eternal time and space.'

"Since You are the shelter of Brahmā and Śiva (*tvad āśrayatvāt*), You are indirectly called the creator and destroyer. The qualities of a person being sheltered are often ascribed to the giver of shelter. Just as when the country is fortunate, the king is called fortunate. In this way You are Brahmā and Śiva."

"This is also in accordance with the concept of *rāsa*. The form of Kṛṣṇa is distinct in terms of *rāsa*, though He is one with other forms of the Lord (*Viṣṇu-tattva*). In the ultimate sense, Brahmā, Śiva and Kṛṣṇa are but one form: *siddhāntatas tv abhede 'pi, śrīśa-kṛṣṇa-svarūpayoḥ, rasenotkṛṣyate kṛṣṇa, rūpam eṣā rāsa-sthitiḥ,* "According to

transcendental realization, there is no difference between the forms of Nārāyana and Kṛṣṇa. Yet in Kṛṣṇa there is a special transcendental attraction due to the conjugal mellow, and consequently He surpasses Nārāyana. This is the conclusion of transcendental mellows." (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.59)

|| 10.3.20 ||

sa tvaṁ tri-loka-sthitaye sva-māyayā

bibharṣi śuklaṁ khalu varṇam ātmanaḥ

sargāya raktaṁ rajasopabṛṁhitaṁ

kṛṣṇaṁ ca varṇaṁ tamasā janātyaye

TRANSLATION

My Lord, Your form is transcendental to the three material modes, yet for the maintenance of the three worlds, You assume the white color of Viṣṇu in goodness; for creation, which is surrounded by the quality of passion, You appear reddish; and at the end, when there is a need for annihilation, which is surrounded by ignorance, You appear blackish.

COMMENTARY

"A question arises concerning this. It is well known that the creation takes place through Brahmā. Then, how are You also the creator? Brahmā and others are Your forms alone." That is the intention of this verse.

śuklaṁ: white; "You, by Your personal energy (*svamāyayā*), manifest Yourself in the form of Viṣṇu. Here *śuklaṁ* cannot mean white because Viṣṇu is black. At the time of destruction of all people You are black in color, and for creation in the mode of passion You are red. We cannot say that Viṣṇu is nourished or influenced by *sattva guṇa* and therefore described as white. Unlike Brahmā and Śiva who have connection with the other *guṇas*, Viṣṇu has no contact whatsoever with *sattva guṇa*, the mode of goodness. Viṣṇu is close to *sattva* but does not touch it.

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (10.88.5) confirms this: *harir hi nirguṇaḥ sākśāt puruṣaḥ prakṛteḥ paraḥ...* 'Lord Hari, however, has no connection with the material modes. He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the all-seeing eternal witness, who is transcendental to material nature.'

"Also the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* says: *sattvādayo na santīśe yatra na prākṛtā gunāḥ, sa śuddhaḥ sarva-śuddhebhyaḥ pumān ādyaḥ prasīdatu,* 'The Supreme Personality of Godhead,

Viṣṇu, is beyond the three qualities of goodness, passion and ignorance. No material qualities exist in Him.’

“The *śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (6.11) says: *sākṣī cetāh kevalo nirguṇaś ca*, ‘Though the Supreme Lord has no material qualities Himself, He is the unique witness and giver of consciousness.’”

|| 10.3.21 ||

tvam asya lokasya vibho rirakṣiṣur gṛhe ’vatīrṇo ’si mamākhileśvara

rājanya-saṁjñāsura-koṭi-yūthapair nirvyūhyamānā nihaniṣyase camūḥ

TRANSLATION

O my Lord, proprietor of all creation, You have now appeared in my house, desiring to protect this world. I am sure that You will kill all the armies that are moving all over the world under the leadership of politicians who are dressed as kṣatriya rulers but who are factually demons. They must be killed by You for the protection of the innocent public.

COMMENTARY

“O father, in truth you know about Me. But if you know, then say why I have appeared in your house?” This verse answers: “Taking the name of a king, You will kill all the troops directed by the demons in order to protect the devotees and the citizens in general.”

|| 10.3.22 ||

ayaṁ tv asabhyas tava janma nau gṛhe śrutvāgrajāṁs te nyavadhīt sureśvara

sa te ’vatāraṁ puruṣaiḥ samarpitaṁ śrutvādhunaivābhisaraty udāyudhaḥ

TRANSLATION

O my Lord, Lord of the demigods, after hearing the prophecy that You would take birth in our home and kill him, this uncivilized Kaṁsa killed so many of Your elder brothers. As soon as he hears from his lieutenants that You have appeared, he will immediately come with weapons to kill You.

COMMENTARY

“Though I know all Your glories, 1 cannot cross the ocean of uncertainty. Now I will inform You all about evil Kaṁsa.”

Anticipating that his son will say, “No father, he will not kill Me because he will be overcome with the sweetness of My form,”

Vasudeva answers, “But Kaṁsa is uncivilized, and has no taste for *rasa*. His servants will inform him of Your birth and he will come here. I can see him coming now, so hide Your form. I am afraid of what will happen when he comes desiring to kill You.”

|| 10.3.23 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

athainam ātmajaṁ vīkṣya mahā-puruṣa-lakṣaṇam

devakī tam upādhāvat kaṁsād bhītā suvismitā

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: Thereafter, having seen that her child had all the symptoms of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Devakī, who was very much afraid of Kaṁsa and unusually astonished, began to offer prayers to the Lord.

COMMENTARY

Seeing her husband’s fear, and seeing that her newly born child did not withdraw His form, but was smiling instead, Devakī became completely wonderstruck and thought: “What shall I do? This child, identifying himself as God, has no fear of Kaṁsa. Of course, in front of the Supreme Lord, Kaṁsa is nothing. So why should we be afraid? What nonsense we are.”

|| 10.3.24 ||

śrī-devaky uvāca

rūpaṁ yat tat prāhur avyaktam ādyaṁ brahma jyotir nirguṇaṁ nirvikāram

sattā-mātraṁ nirviśeṣaṁ nirīhaṁ sa tvaṁ sākṣād viṣṇur adhyātma-dīpaḥ

TRANSLATION

Śrī Devakī said: My dear Lord, there are different Vedas, some of which describe You as unperceivable through words and the mind. Yet You are the origin of the entire cosmic manifestation. You are Brahman, the greatest of everything, full of effulgence like the sun. You have no material cause, You are free from change and deviation, and You have no material desires. Thus the Vedas say that You are the substance. Therefore, my Lord, You are directly the origin of all Vedic statements, and by understanding You, one gradually understands everything. You are different from the light of Brahman and Paramātmā, yet You are not different from them. Everything emanates from You. Indeed, You are the cause of all causes, Lord Viṣṇu, the light of all transcendental knowledge.

COMMENTARY

"As it is well known that the devotees control the Lord by praising Him, I will make this child submissive by my prayers and then express my desires."

Thinking in this way, Devakī speaks: "O Lord, we are afflicted by fear at every second, but You are not fearful at all." Devakī expresses this in four verses (24-27). Śrī Devakī prays, "The *Vedas* describe Your famous form as *avyakta*, not perceivable by the material senses; *ādyam*, without birth, and the one whose bodily effulgence is unchanging and without material qualities"

This statement about Brahman is supported in the scriptures in many places. The *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.13.55) says:*yasya bhāsā saivam idaṁ, vibhāti sacarācaram*, "Thus Lord Brahmā saw the Supreme Brahman, by whose energy this entire universe, with its moving and nonmoving living beings, is manifested."

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (10.28.15) states: *satyatṁ jñānam anantaṁ yad brahma-jyotiḥ sanātanam,* "Lord Kṛṣṇa revealed the indestructible spiritual effulgence, which is unlimited, conscious and eternal."

Lord Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna in the *Hari-vaṁśa*:*tat-paraṁ paramaṁ brahma, sarvaṁ vibhajate jagat, mamaiva tad ghanaṁ tejo, jñātum arhasi bhārata,* "That Supreme Truth, Parabrahman, expands itself into all the variegatedness of this universe. You should know it to be My own concentrated effulgence, O Bhārata."

Brahma-saṁhitā (5.40) states: *yasya prabhā prabhavato jagadaṇḍa-koṭi, koṭiṣv aśeṣa-vasudhādi-vibhūti-bhinnam, tad-brahma niṣkalam anantam aśeṣa-bhūtam, govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi,* "I worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead, by whose personal effulgence the unlimited *brahmajyoti* is manifested. In that *brahmajyoti* there are innumerable universes, and each is filled with innumerable planets."

Kṛṣṇa Himself says in *Bhagavad-gītā* 14.27: *brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham*, "I am the basis of the impersonal Brahman." In relation to Lord Kṛṣṇa's *vibhuti* or powers, Śrīdhara Swami in his commentary on *Gita* mentions that the impersonal feature of the Lord is called Brahman, indicated by the use of the word *param*.

In Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (8.24.38), Lord Matsya assures King Satyavrata that the Absolute Truth can be known from the words of the *Vedas: madīyaṁ mahimānaṁ ca, paraṁ brahmeti śabditam, vetsyasy anugrahītaṁ me, sampraśnair vivṛtaṁ hṛdi*, "You will be thoroughly advised and favored by Me, and because of your inquiries, everything about My glories, which are known as *paraṁ brahma*, will be manifest within your heart. Thus you will know everything about Me." In one *stotra*, Yamunācārya says: *paratparam brahma ca te vibhutayah*, "The Supreme Brahman is Your *vibhuti*" (exceptional opulence or specific powers). The *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* states: *tad brahma Kṛṣṇa yor aikyam mam kiran arko pamayujor,* ''Kṛṣṇa and the Brahman are one as in the example of the sun and its rays.

sattā mātram: the original substance; Devakī continues, "Kṛṣṇa! Your associates, devotees, holy abode and forms all arise from *suddha sattva." nirviseśam:* "You are beyond the particulars of the material world." *nirīham:* without material desires; "You are without material thirst because You are full and perfect." Or it can mean, "You are the person who takes away material desire from the devotee's heart, and gives that devotee the desire to attain the Lord." The *Amara-kosa* Sanskrit dictionary says the word *īha* means desire, endeavor or thirst.

adhyātma dīpāḥ: the light for all transcendental knowledge; "You are Viṣṇu because You reveal all truths. Though I am ignorant, I have spoken as You have revealed Yourself to me."

|| 10.3.25 ||

naṣṭe loke dvi-parārdhāvasāne mahā-bhūteṣv ādi-bhūtaṁ gateṣu

vyakte 'vyaktaṁ kāla-vegena yāte bhavān ekaḥ śiṣyate 'śeṣa-saṁjñaḥ

TRANSLATION

After millions of years, at the time of cosmic annihilation, when everything, manifested and unmanifested, is annihilated by the force of time, the five gross elements enter into the subtle conception, and the manifested categories enter into the unmanifested substance. At that time, You alone remain, and You are known as Ananta Śeṣa-nāga.

COMMENTARY

“For one who is not destroyed during the *mahā-pralaya* (annihilation of Brahmā and whole universe), what is the question of fear? The five primary elements (*mahābhūtam*, earth, water, fire, air, ether) merge into *ādibhūtaṁ* (subtle elements of sense perception) or *ahaṅkāra*. Ahaṅkāra merges into *vyaktam* or *mahat tattva*. The mahat tattva merges into *avyakta* or *prakṛti*. Then only You remain.

“Those things mentioned in the previous verse such as the forms of Nārāyaṇa and others, the *brahmajyoti* and the *dhama* also remain. The Lord’s associates, place and cloth are all eternal. You are called Śeṣa because You remain (*avaśeṣa*). This is a way of deriving the name Śeṣa.”

|| 10.3.26 ||

yo ’yaṁ kālas tasya te ’vyakta-bandho ceṣṭāṁ āhuś ceṣṭate yena viśvam

nimeṣādir vatsarānto mahīyāṁs taṁ tveśānaṁ kṣema-dhāma prapadye

TRANSLATION

O inaugurator of the material energy, this wonderful creation works under the control of powerful time, which is divided into seconds, minutes, hours and years. This element of time, which extends for many millions of years, is but another form of Lord Viṣṇu. For Your pastimes, You act as the controller of time, but You are the reservoir of all good fortune. Let me offer my full surrender unto Your Lordship.

COMMENTARY

In the previous verse it appears that time is independent. Thus this verse speaks of time’s origin. It speaks of the cause of time as Devakī prays, “Who does not fear fearful time? That time is Your *kriya śakti* or *cesta* (pastime).”

Therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa is addressed as the inaugurator of *prakriti* (*avyakta bandho*). “The universe runs by the influence of time. But what is time? Time is *nimesa* or moments amounting to years, which again multiply into a day of Brahmā (*dvi prarardha*). Because You are fearless You can make me fearless. Therefore, I surrender to You (*tva*).”

|| 10.3.27 ||

martyo mṛtyu-vyāla-bhītaḥ palāyan lokān sarvān nirbhayaṁ nādhyagacchat

tvat pādābjaṁ prāpya yadṛcchayādya susthaḥ śete mṛtyur asmād apaiti

TRANSLATION

No one in this material world has become free from the four principles birth, death, old age and disease, even by fleeing to various planets. But now that You have appeared, My Lord, death is fleeing in fear of You, and the living entities, having obtained shelter at Your lotus feet by Your mercy, are sleeping in full mental peace.

COMMENTARY

Devakī prays, “Since those who take shelter of Your lotus feet become fearless, what to speak of those who meet You face to face. Wandering throughout the universe, one cannot become free from fear. By great mercy (*yadrcchaya*) one receives devotion to You and thereby attains Your lotus feet (*tvat pādābjaṁ*), which act like Dhanvantari, the Lord of medicine. By this medicine a person becomes healthy.” According to the *Medinī* dictionary, the word *abjam* (*tvat pādābjam*) means lotus flower, conch, moon, and Lord Dhanvantari.

Devakī continues, “O Lord, origin of all! Although I am Your devotee and have been accepted by You as Your mother, I am still afflicted by fear of Kaṁsa.”

|| 10.3.28 ||

sa tvaṁ ghorād ugrasenātmajān nas

trāhi trastān bhṛtya-vitrāsa-hāsi

rūpaṁ cedaṁ pauruṣaṁ dhyāna-dhiṣṇyaṁ
mā pratyakṣaṁ māṁsa-dṛśāṁ kṛṣīṣṭhāḥ

TRANSLATION

My Lord, because You dispel all the fear of Your devotees, I request You to save us and give us protection from the terrible fear of Kaṁsa. Your form as Viṣṇu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is appreciated by yogīs in meditation. Please make this form invisible to those who see with material eyes.

COMMENTARY

Devakī prays, “You are fearless and Your devotees are fearless. Then why, O Lord, do You keep Your mother and father in fear?” This is the intention of this verse.

ghorād: terribly fierce; means great fear. Out of fear Devakī does not mention the name of Kaṁsa directly but uses the word *ugra senātmajān*, son of Ugrasena. “You destroy the fears of Your devotees, but why do You not remove our fear?”

Kṛṣṇa replies to Devakī, “O mother, I have appeared to kill Kaṁsa. Bring Kaṁsa here and I will kill him right before your eyes.”

Hearing such talk from Kṛṣṇa simply increases Devakī’s fear. Due to motherly affection (*vātsalya-bhāva*), Devakī thinks that her small child cannot kill Kaṁsa. Therefore, she worries about harm coming to Him from Kaṁsa and becomes more fearful.

“It is not suitable to follow the strategy of showing fear before my child who is showing himself as God. It is a better policy to use words.” Thinking thus, Devakī began to reason in another way in order to get her child to conceal His four-armed Viṣṇu form. “O master, this splendid form, which is the object of meditation, should not be seen by material eyes.”

|| 10.3.29 ||

janma te mayy asau pāpo mā vidyān madhusūdana

samudvije bhavad-dhetoḥ kaṁsād aham adhīra-dhīḥ

TRANSLATION

O Madhusūdana, because of Your appearance, I am becoming more and more anxious in fear of Kaṁsa. Therefore, please arrange for that sinful Kaṁsa to be unable to understand that You have taken birth from my womb.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa replies, “O mother, if I make this four-armed form disappear, when Kaṁsa comes he will ask, ‘where is the child?’ Thinking you have stolen the child, he will commit violence against you, will he not?”

To answer this Devakī replies, “I have no fear of that.” Thus she speaks this verse. “Do something so Kaṁsa (*pāpo*) will not know that You have taken birth from me”

Kṛṣṇa says, “Having killed the Madhu demon, is it necessary that 1 kill Kaṁsa?”

Fearing this question Devakī addresses her son: “O Madhusūdana! At present, Kaṁsa is thousands of times more powerful than Madhu of the past. Let Kaṁsa beat me for my offense. But I only desire Your safety.”

Kṛṣṇa replies, “You have spoken of My powers in the previous verses, but was all that empty words?”

Devakī answers, “Truly, O son, as Your mother I am unsteady of mind (*adhīra dhīḥ*). Do not be sad. This is my fault and I take full responsibility for it. But out of affection for Your mother, please withdraw Your form.”

|| 10.3.30 ||

upasaṁhara viśvātmann ado rūpam alaukikam

śaṅkha-cakra-gadā-padma-śriyā juṣṭaṁ catur-bhujam

TRANSLATION

O my Lord, You are the all-pervading Supreme Personality of Godhead, and Your transcendental four-armed form, holding conchshell, disc, club and lotus, is unnatural for this world. Please withdraw this form [and become just like a natural human child so that I may try to hide You somewhere].

COMMENTARY

Devakī continues, “As You pervade the whole universe and I reside within the universe, You also reside within me. How then has this weakness of heart arisen in me? It must be Your fault.” Thus Devakī addresses the Lord as *visvātma*, soul of the universe.

“Withdraw this uncommon four-armed Viṣṇu form and assume a form of a normal human baby, and I will quickly hide You.”

|| 10.3.31 ||

viśvaṁ yad etat sva-tanau niśānte yathāvakāśaṁ puruṣaḥ paro bhavān

bibharti so 'yaṁ mama garbhago 'bhūd aho nṛ-lokasya viḍambanaṁ hi tat

TRANSLATION

At the time of devastation, the entire cosmos, containing all created moving and nonmoving entities, enters Your transcendental body and is held there without difficulty. But now this transcendental form has taken birth from my womb. People will not be able to believe this, and I shall become an object of ridicule.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa says, "Why should I withdraw this form? You should not become proud to attain the Lord as Your son."

Fearing such words from the Lord, Devakī speaks, "I do not want fame or position. You hold the universe within the temple of Your body (*sva tanau*) comfortably (*yathā avakāśam*), but You have appeared in my womb. Common people will make fun of me, for how is this possible? The neighbours will joke, 'O foolish Devakī, the Lord who has a gigantic form of thousands of universes is situated as your son in your little womb. Are you not ashamed to make this claim?' I will not get any fame for this event."

Here a question arises: "How is it that Devakī and Vasudeva who realize the Supreme Lord directly with their senses can be afflicted with fear and lamentation arising from ignorance?" One should not raise such a question. Such fear and lamentation is actually an expression of *prema* arising from *cit-śakti*, Kṛṣṇa's internal spiritual energy, which is the basis of the external energy, material knowledge and ignorance. The fear shown by Vasudeva and Devakī is one of the *vyabhicārī-bhāvas* (thirty-three transitory bodily symptoms manifest in ecstatic love). Their fear did not arise from ignorance. Such an idea would attribute a fault to *prema*.

What is the proof that *prema* is beyond *māyā*? If *prema* is *māyā* then the Supreme Lord would be controlled by *māyā*. By studying the scriptures one will conclude that Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is only controlled by *prema* not by *māyā*. This point is explained in the *Bhagavad-gītā* 18.55: *bhaktyā mām abhijānāti yāvān yaś cāsmi tattvataḥ,* and confirmed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.14.21: *bhaktyāham ekayā grāhyaḥ,* without *bhakti* one cannot

understand the spiritual situation of the Lord. Thus the Lord Himself emphatically declares that He is known only by pure devotion or *prema*.

Bhakti may be considered in three stages, called *guṇī-bhūta*, *pradhānī -bhūta* and *kevala* and the results are also different. From *guṇī-bhuta bhakti* comes *jñāna* (simple knowledge); from *pradhānī-bhūta bhakti* comes *jñānamayī rati* (knowledge mixed with love); and from *kevala bhakti* (pure love) comes *prema*. Through *jñāna* one realizes the Brahman, transcendental bliss without variety (*cit sukha mayaṁ*); through *jñānamayī rati* one realizes the Lord in majesty and opulence (*cid aiśvarya mayaṁ*); and through *prema* one realizes the sweet aspect of Kṛṣṇa, Rāma and others (*mādhurya mayī*).

Although all the forms of God are one (*Viṣṇu-tattva*), due to varieties of taste or *rasa* there are different appearances of God. There are seven types of sweetness pertaining to the transcendental form of the Lord: sweetness of form, touch, smell, sound and taste, the sweetness of the Lord's affection for the devotee (*bhakta-vatsalya*), and the sweetness of His pastimes (*līlā-mādhurī*). The sweetness of Vraja has two additional types of sweetness: Kṛṣṇa's flute (*veṇu-mādhurī*) and His loving exchanges with His associates (*prema-mādhurī*). In total there are nine types of sweetness. It is said in the scriptures: "In Vraja, Kṛṣṇa displays four unique types of sweetness: *rūpa-mādhurya, līlā-mādhurya, prema-mādhurya* and *veṇu-mādhurya*."

There are four types of *prema*: *dāsya, sakhya, vātsalya* and *ujjvala* or *mādhurya*. The glory of *vātsalya-prema* is that it makes Kṛṣṇa the object of pity and extreme attachment. Although Kṛṣṇa's majesty (*aiśvarya*) is present, the mood of *vātsalya* (affection) covers it in such a way that Kṛṣṇa becomes subservient and bound by the ropes of attachment. In return, Kṛṣṇa gives those devotees a taste of sweetness unavailable to others. The taste (*rasa*) arising from such intense attachment is millions of times more than that experienced through *jñāna* or *jñānamayī rati*.

Because of great attachment a mother derives more pleasure from her son, though he is full of faults and lacking all good qualities, than from seeing the full moon which extinguishes all suffering and bestows all bliss. If that is so, then just imagine the bliss produced from having a son who is the Supreme Lord? This is the difference between *jñāna* and *prema*.

Just as ignorance binds the living entity with attachment that gives suffering, similarly *prema* binds Kṛṣṇa, who is the personification of bliss, with attachment that gives rise to great joy. Though a criminal is bound with ropes and chains, a respectable man is honored by binding him with a costly, soft and fragrant turban and coat. One type of bondage gives suffering and the other bondage gives pleasure. The living entity bound

by ignorance experiences suffering, whereas Kṛṣṇa experiences great joy being bound by *prema*.

As there are degrees of the five types of suffering experienced by the living entity due to the covering of ignorance, so there are different levels of happiness in *prema* due to the different degrees of covering of *jñāna* and *aiśvarya*. The *prema* of mother Yaśodā and other pure devotees of her caliber mutually binds them to Kṛṣṇa with the ropes of intense attachment and completely covers *jñāna* and *aiśvarya*. This in turn creates a type of happiness not available to devotees like mother Devakī, whose *prema* has less strength due to the mixture of *jñāna* and *aiśvarya* (appreciation of Kṛṣṇa's power and opulence).

Why do Yaśodā and Devakī have different types of *prema*? Although they are both *nitya-siddha* devotees (eternal associates of Kṛṣṇa), their difference in *prema* is also *nitya-siddha*. There can be no further discussion on this.

|| 10.3.32 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

tvam eva pūrva-sarge 'bhūḥ pṛśniḥ svāyambhuve sati

tadāyaṁ sutapā nāma prajāpatir akalmaṣaḥ

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Personality of Godhead replied: My dear mother, best of the chaste, in your previous birth, in the Svāyambhuva millennium, you were known as Pṛśni, and Vasudeva, who was the most pious Prajāpati, was named Sutapā.

COMMENTARY

The Lord said, "O mother, not only in this birth, but in previous births I have appeared in your womb. Why are you thinking yourself so fallen? You are not an ordinary human. During the reign of Svāyambhuva Manu you became (*abhūḥ)* Pṛśni. O Sati (Devakī) and Vasudeva (*āyam*) was your husband Sutapā."

|| 10.3.33 ||

yuvāṁ vai brahmaṇādiṣṭau prajā-sarge yadā tataḥ

sanniyamyendriya-grāmaṁ tepāthe paramaṁ tapaḥ

TRANSLATION

When both of you were ordered by Lord Brahmā to create progeny, you first underwent severe austerities by controlling your senses.

|| 10.3.34-35 ||

varṣa-vātātapa-hima- gharma-kāla-guṇān anu

sahamānau śvāsa-rodha-vinirdhūta-mano-malau

śīrṇa-parṇānilāhārāv upaśāntena cetasā

mattaḥ kāmān abhīpsantau mad-ārādhanam īhatuḥ

TRANSLATION

My dear father and mother, you endured rain, wind, strong sun, scorching heat and severe cold, suffering all sorts of inconvenience according to different seasons. By practicing prāṇāyāma to control the air within the body through yoga, and by eating only air and dry leaves fallen from the trees, you cleansed from your minds all dirty things. In this way, desiring a benediction from Me, you worshiped Me with peaceful minds.

COMMENTARY

ātapaḥ: means intense burning due to the sun's rays and *gharma* means heat.

|| 10.3.36 ||

evaṁ vāṁ tapyatos tīvraṁ tapaḥ parama-duṣkaram

divya-varṣa-sahasrāṇi dvādaśeyur mad-ātmanoḥ

TRANSLATION

Thus you spent twelve thousand celestial years performing difficult activities of tapasya in consciousness of Me [Kṛṣṇa consciousness].

COMMENTARY

mad-ātmanoḥ: means “absorbing your minds in Me.”

|| 10.3.37-38 ||

tadā vāṁ parituṣṭo ’ham amunā vapuṣānaghe

tapasā śraddhayā nityaṁ bhaktyā ca hṛdi bhāvitaḥ

prādurāsaṁ varada-rāḍ yuvayoḥ kāma-ditsayā

vriyatāṁ vara ity ukte mādṛśo vāṁ vṛtaḥ sutaḥ

TRANSLATION

O sinless mother Devakī, after the expiry of twelve thousand celestial years, in which you constantly contemplated Me within the core of your heart with great faith, devotion and austerity, I was very much satisfied with you. Since I am the best of all bestowers of benediction, I appeared in this same form as Kṛṣṇa to ask you to take from Me the benediction you desired. You then expressed your desire to have a son exactly like Me.

COMMENTARY

“Because of your austerities and meditation on Me, I became very pleased to appear in that form (four handed).”

The austerity performed was constant meditation on the Lord with devotion and faith. The use of the three words, *śraddhayā,nityaṁ* and *bhaktyā* indicates that the devotion of Pṛśni and Sutapā was not merely a form of *yoga* practice. Rather their devotion shows total absorption in the Lord, which by itself leads to perfection and *prema*. However, the *bhakti*, devotion, of Pṛśni and Sutapā was mixed with *jñāna* and *aiśvarya* because of they practiced *yoga* and severe austerities.

Some also reason that since the *nitya siddha parikaras* (eternal associates of the Lord) Vasudeva and Devakī had *nitya siddha aiśvarya-jñāna* mixed *bhakti*, their *aṁśās* Pṛśni and Sutapā also had mixed *bhakti*. Their austerities and *yoga* practice were therefore incidental.

bhāvitaḥ: fixed in determination; This word is used instead of *cintata*. The meditation of Pṛśni and Sutapā was filled with *bhāva*, transcendental love. In other words, they had genuine pure devotion for the Lord.

|| 10.3.39 ||

ajuṣṭa-grāmya-viṣayāv anapatyau ca dam-patī

na vavrāthe ’pavargaṁ me mohitau deva-māyayā

TRANSLATION

Being husband and wife but always sonless, you were attracted by sexual desires, for by the influence of devamāyā, transcendental love, you wanted to have Me as your son. Therefore you never desired to be liberated from this material world.

COMMENTARY

māyayā: refers to Devakī and Vasudeva’s affection for their son. *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.8.43) says: *vaiṣṇavīṁ vyatanon māyām, putra-snehamayīṁ vibhuḥ,* “By the influence of His internal potency, *yogamāyā*, Kṛṣṇa inspired mother Yaśodā to become absorbed in intense maternal affection for her son.”

mohitau: means that Devakī and Vasudeva were overcome with bliss. “Being childless and detached from material enjoyment, but overcome with bliss by parental affection, you did not pray for liberation.”

|| 10.3.40 ||

gate mayi yuvāṁ labdhvā varaṁ mat-sadṛśaṁ sutam

grāmyān bhogān abhuñjāthāṁ yuvāṁ prāpta-manorathau

TRANSLATION

After you received that benediction and I disappeared, you engaged yourselves in sex to have a son like Me, and I fulfilled your desire.

COMMENTARY

“Desiring in this way for a son, you then engaged in sexual intercourse. According to the Sanskrit dictionary *Amara-kośa*, *grāmyān bhogān* means sex life.

|| 10.3.41 ||

adṛṣṭvānyatamaṁ loke śīlaudārya-guṇaiḥ samam

ahaṁ suto vām abhavaṁ pṛśnigarbha iti śrutaḥ

TRANSLATION

Since I found no one else as highly elevated as you in simplicity and other qualities of good character, I appeared in this world as Pṛśnigarbha, or one who is celebrated as having taken birth from Pṛśni.

COMMENTARY

“In My first birth I appeared as Pṛśnigarbha.” This refers to the Tretā-yuga *avatāra* mentioned in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (11.5.26): *viṣṇur yajñaḥ pṛśnigarbhaḥ, sarvadeva urukramaḥ*, “In Tretā-yuga the Lord is glorified by the names Viṣṇu, Yajña, Pṛśnigarbha, Sarvadeva, Urukrama, etc.”

|| 10.3.42 ||

tayor vāṁ punar evāham adityām āsa kaśyapāt

upendra iti vikhyāto vāmanatvāc ca vāmanaḥ

TRANSLATION

In the next millennium, I again appeared from the two of you, who appeared as My mother, Aditi, and My father, Kaśyapa. I was known as Upendra, and because of being a dwarf, I was also known as Vāmana.

COMMENTARY

“He who appeared as Vāmana to Aditi and Kaśyapa has now appeared as your son, Myself.”

|| 10.3.43 ||

tṛtīye ’smin bhave ’haṁ vai tenaiva vapuṣātha vām

jāto bhūyas tayor eva satyaṁ me vyāhṛtaṁ sati

TRANSLATION

O supremely chaste mother, I, the same personality, have now appeared of you both as your son for the third time. Take My words as the truth.

COMMENTARY

“In the present birth I have been born with four arms. I was born in the first birth as Pṛśnigarbha, in the second birth as Vāmana, and now in the third birth I am born.”

This indicates that the birth as Kṛṣṇa is the full, complete form and the previous two are His *aṁśās*, partial expansions. In verse 31 of this chapter, Kṛṣṇa told Devakī, “You were previously Pṛśni” but He did not say “Pṛśni is you.” In verse 45 Kṛṣṇa says, “By knowing I am the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and by constantly thinking of Me with love as your son, you will go to My spiritual abode.” By these evidences it is shown that Pṛśni and Sutapā are expansions of Devakī and Vasudeva.

|| 10.3.44 ||

etad vāṁ darśitaṁ rūpaṁ prāg-janma-smaraṇāya me

nānyathā mad-bhavaṁ jñānaṁ martya-liṅgena jāyate

TRANSLATION

I have shown you this form of Viṣṇu just to remind you of My previous births. Otherwise, if I appeared like an ordinary human child, you would not believe that the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Viṣṇu, has indeed appeared.

COMMENTARY

“I have appeared in a four armed Viṣṇu form because you would not recognize Me as God if I appeared in My complete, original two armed human-like form.”

|| 10.3.45 ||

yuvāṁ māṁ putra-bhāvena brahma-bhāvena cāsakṛt

cintayantau kṛta-snehau yāsyethe mad-gatiṁ parām

TRANSLATION

Both of you, husband and wife, constantly think of Me as your son, but always know that I am the Supreme Personality of Godhead. By thus thinking of Me constantly with love and affection, you will achieve the highest perfection: returning home, back to Godhead.

COMMENTARY

In the scriptures describing worship of Kṛṣṇa through *mantras*, Vasudeva is mentioned as the father of Kṛṣṇa. This shows without doubt that Vasudeva is eternally in the position of Kṛṣṇa's father. But in order to increase their bliss by promising perfection of their *sadhana* in this birth, their status as Kṛṣṇa's eternal associates (*nitya-siddha parikaras*) is hidden in this verse. "By thinking of Me you will attain Me."

The actual meaning of the verse however is: "I will now go to My most excellent eternal abode of Gokula. After eleven years, I will return to Mathurā and you will meet Me at that time. But now I will be separated from you."

|| 10.3.46 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

ity uktvāsīd dharis tūṣṇīṁ bhagavān ātma-māyayā

pitroḥ sampaśyatoḥ sadyo babhūva prākṛtaḥ śiśuḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: After thus instructing His father and mother, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, remained silent. In their presence, by His internal energy, He then transformed Himself into a small human child. [In other words, He transformed Himself into His original form: kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam [SB 1.3.28].

COMMENTARY

ātma māyayā: own spiritual energy; According to the *Maha Saṁhitā, ātma māyayā* means "by one's own free will."

babhuva prākṛtaḥ śiśuḥ: became an ordinary human being; means that Kṛṣṇa manifested His eternally perfect, spiritual form as a baby, but not a material baby. *Prākṛtaḥ* means *prākṛti*, *svarūpa* and *svabhāva* (eternal form and personality). In referring to great souls on earth, they are called *prākṛti-siddha*. Thus the word *prākṛtaḥ* here means *svarūpa* or *svabhāva*. It cannot mean material in this context because there are statements like the following from the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.9.13) which contradict this:

na cāntar na bahir yasya na pūrvaṁ nāpi cāparam

pūrvāparaṁ bahiś cāntar jagato yo jagac ca yaḥ

taṁ matvātmajam avyaktaṁ martya-liṅgam adhokṣajam

gopīkolūkhale dāmnā babandha prākṛtaṁ yathā

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead has no beginning and no end, no exterior and no interior, no front and no rear. In other words, He is all-pervading. Because He is not under the influence of the element of time, for Him there is no difference between past, present and future; He exists in His own transcendental form at all times. Being absolute, beyond relativity, He is free from distinctions between cause and effect, although He is the cause and effect of everything. That unmanifested person, who is beyond the perception of the senses, had now appeared as a human child, and mother Yaśodā, considering Him her own ordinary child, bound Him to the wooden mortar with a rope."

In this statement it is clear that He who mother Yaśodā bound up was like an ordinary material child (*prākṛtā śiśuḥ*), but actually He was not *prākṛtā*, He was *aprākṛtā*, completely spiritual. Therefore the Lord showed His original spiritual form as a human-like baby.

|| 10.3.47 ||

tataś ca śaurir bhagavat-pracoditaḥ sutaṁ samādāya sa sūtikā-gṛhāt

yadā bahir gantum iyeṣa tarhy ajā yā yogamāyājani nanda-jāyayā

TRANSLATION

Thereafter, exactly when Vasudeva, being inspired by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, was about to take the newborn child from the delivery room, Yogamāyā, the Lord's spiritual energy, took birth as the daughter of the wife of Mahārāja Nanda.

COMMENTARY

Vasudeva was instructed by Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, “If you are afraid, then take Me to Gokula and bring the child of Yaśodā, Yogamāyā, back here.”

After being instructed, Vasudeva saw that his chains automatically loosened. When Vasudeva was about to leave the prison, Yogamāyā took birth in Gokula as the daughter of Yaśodā. The *Hari-vaṁśa* says that in the eighth month of pregnancy, before full term, Devakī and Yaśodā gave birth at the same time to their children. But the *Bhāgavatam* states that Yaśodā gave birth after Devakī.

How to correlate these contradictory statements? Exactly when Devakī gave birth to Kṛṣṇa in Mathurā, Yaśodā also gave birth to Kṛṣṇa in Gokula. After that, as described in this verse, Yaśodā gave birth to Yogamāyā. Thus two children appeared from Yaśodā at different times. This is confirmed in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.4.9), which describes Yogamāyā as *ānujā*, the younger sister of Kṛṣṇa. But when Kṛṣṇa appeared from Yaśodā it is not stated that He had four hands. Therefore, it is understood that Kṛṣṇa appeared from Yaśodā with two hands because she worshiped Kṛṣṇa without understanding His Godhood. But Vasudeva and Devakī worshiped their son as Viṣṇu.

|| 10.3.48-49 ||

tayā hṛta-pratyaya-sarva-vṛttiṣu dvāḥ-stheṣu paureṣv api śāyiteṣv atha

dvāraś ca sarvāḥ pihitā duratyayā bṛhat-kapāṭāyasa-kīla-śṛṅkhalaiḥ

tāḥ kṛṣṇa-vāhe vasudeva āgate svayaṁ vyavaryanta yathā tamo raveḥ

vavarṣa parjanya upāṁśu-garjitaḥ śeṣo ’nvagād vāri nivārayan phaṇaiḥ

TRANSLATION

By the influence of Yogamāyā, all the doorkeepers fell fast asleep, their senses unable to work, and the other inhabitants of the house also fell deeply asleep. When the sun rises, the darkness automatically disappears; similarly, when Vasudeva appeared, the closed doors, which were strongly pinned with iron and locked with iron chains, opened automatically. Since the clouds in the sky were mildly thundering and showering, Ananta-nāga, an expansion of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, followed Vasudeva, beginning from the door, with hoods expanded to protect Vasudeva and the transcendental child.

COMMENTARY

Through her expansion, Yogamāyā covered the knowledge gathering senses of the doorkeepers so they fell into deep sleep.

svayam vyavaryanta: automatically opened wide; The doors were insurmountable being made of thick panels, huge bolts and chains. But they opened by themselves just like the sun driving away darkness.

upāṁśu: mildly resound; The clouds began to rumble softly. Śeṣa, an expansion of Lord Balarāma, spread His hood like an umbrella. *Braḥmāṇḍa Purāṇa* says: *śayyāsana paridhāna pādukā, chatra, camaraiḥ kim nabhus tasya kṛṣṇasya murtibhedais ca murtiṣu,* "Whenever Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa takes different forms, Lord Balarāma's expansion Śeṣa serves Kṛṣṇa as His bed, seat, shoes, umbrella and camara."

|| 10.3.50 ||

maghoni varṣaty asakṛd yamānujā gambhīra-toyaugha-javormi-phenilā

bhayānakāvarta-śatākulā nadī mārgaṁ dadau sindhur iva śriyaḥ pateḥ

TRANSLATION

Because of constant rain sent by the demigod Indra, the River Yamunā was filled with deep water, foaming about with fiercely whirling waves. But as the great Indian Ocean had formerly given way to Lord Rāmacandra by allowing Him to construct a bridge, the River Yamunā gave way to Vasudeva and allowed him to cross.

COMMENTARY

The River Yamunā was filled with deep water (*toyaughah*), but she gave way to Vasudeva just as the great Indian Ocean did for Lord Rāma (*śriyaḥ pateḥ*).

|| 10.3.51 ||

nanda-vrajaṁ śaurir upetya tatra tān gopān prasuptān upalabhya nidrayā

sutaṁ yaśodā-śayane nidhāya tat-sutām upādāya punar gṛhān agāt

TRANSLATION

When Vasudeva reached the house of Nanda Mahārāja, he saw that all the cowherd men were fast asleep. Thus he placed his own son on the bed of Yaśodā, picked up her daughter, an expansion of Yogamāyā, and then returned to his residence, the prison house of Kaṁsa.

COMMENTARY

Taking Yaśodā's daughter, Vasudeva returned to the prison. From the mundane point of view it appears unjustified that Vasudeva, who was supposed to be following the highest principles, condoned the sacrifice of another's child to protect his own. Vasudeva cannot be accused of callousness, however, because his normal sense of discrimination was covered by his paternal love (*vātsalya-prema*) for Lord Kṛṣṇa who had appeared as his son.

|| 10.3.52 ||

devakyāḥ śayane nyasya vasudevo 'tha dārikām

pratimucya pador loham āste pūrvavad āvṛtaḥ

TRANSLATION

Vasudeva placed the female child on the bed of Devakī, bound his legs with the iron shackles, and thus remained there as before.

COMMENTARY

pratimucya: bind again; Vasudeva placed the chains back on his feet.

|| 10.3.53 ||

yaśodā nanda-patnī ca jātaṁ param abudhyata

na tal-liṅgaṁ pariśrāntā nidrayāpagata-smṛtiḥ

TRANSLATION

Exhausted by the labor of childbirth, Yaśodā was overwhelmed with sleep and unable to understand what kind of child had been born to her.

COMMENTARY

pariśrāntā: heavy labor; Because of the labor of childbirth Yaśodā only knew that she had given birth, but she did not know whether her offspring was a boy or girl. After the birth, Yaśodā got relief from the labor pains, fell asleep and forgot everything.

ca: also; The word *ca* also means "everything." Taking this meaning then, Yaśodā, like Devakī, clearly understood that her offspring was *param*, the all-attractive Supreme Person. By tasting Kṛṣṇa's sweetness Yaśodā understood that He was the Supreme. Yaśodā realized Kṛṣṇa's true nature through the potency given by the Lord. Unlike Devakī, Yaśodā did not know that Kṛṣṇa was the Supreme Lord because of His specific bodily features such as four-arms, Kaustubha jewel and *cakra*.

The fact that Kṛṣṇa was also born to Yaśodā is not very well known. Because Yaśodā and Devakī were friends, Yaśodā gave her fame to Devakī and allowed Devakī to become famous as the mother of Kṛṣṇa. The name Yaśodā means to give (*dadāti*) fame (*yaśo*). However, the name Devakī is also another name of mother Yaśodā. as stated in the *Bṛhad-viṣṇu Purāṇa: dve nāmnī nanda-bhāryāyā, yaśodā devakīti ca, ataḥ sakhyam abhūt tasya, devakyā śauri-jāyayā,* "The wife of Nanda had two names, Yasodā and also Devakī. Therefore it was natural that she [the wife of Nanda] developed friendship with Devakī, the wife of Śauri [Vasudeva]." This is also in accordance with *Vaiṣṇava Tosani, Ananda Vṛndāvana Campu* and *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta.*

Thus ends the commentary on the Third Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Four

The Atrocities of King Kaṁsa

|| 10.4.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

bahir-antaḥ-pura-dvāraḥ sarvāḥ pūrvavad āvṛtāḥ

tato bāla-dhvaniṁ śrutvā gṛha-pālāḥ samutthitāḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: My dear King Parīkṣit, the doors inside and outside the house closed as before. Thereafter, the inhabitants of the house, especially the watchmen, heard the crying of the newborn child and thus awakened from their beds.

COMMENTARY

This chapter relates Kaṁsa's repentance on hearing Māyā's words, Devakī's forgiving Kaṁsa, and the evil ministers' advice to Kaṁsa.

bāla dhvani: crying of a newborn; means the crying of the infant when he first comes out of the womb. The watchmen were just like dogs protecting a house. On hearing the crying baby, they immediately got up.

|| 10.4.2 ||

te tu tūrṇam upavrajya devakyā garbha-janma tat

ācakhyur bhoja-rājāya yad udvignaḥ pratīkṣate

TRANSLATION

Thereafter, all the watchmen very quickly approached King Kaṁsa, the ruler of the Bhoja dynasty, and submitted the news of the birth of Devakī's child. Kaṁsa, who had awaited this news very anxiously, immediately took action.

COMMENTARY

The guards quickly got up and told Kaṁsa of the birth of Devakī's eighth child (*garbha janma*).

|| 10.4.3 ||

sa talpāt tūrṇam utthāya kālo 'yam iti vihvalaḥ

sūtī-gṛham agāt tūrṇaṁ praskhalan mukta-mūrdhajaḥ

TRANSLATION

Kaṁsa immediately got up from bed, thinking, "Here is Kāla, the supreme time factor, which has taken birth to kill me!" Thus overwhelmed, Kaṁsa, his hair scattered on his head, at once approached the place where the child had been born.

COMMENTARY

The time has come (*kālo ayam*) for killing the child. Or the sentence can mean, "Out of fear, Kaṁsa was thinking that the birth of the child was his own death (*kāla*)."

|| 10.4.4 ||

tam āha bhrātaraṁ devī kṛpaṇā karuṇaṁ satī

snuṣeyaṁ tava kalyāṇa striyaṁ mā hantum arhasi

TRANSLATION

Devakī helplessly, piteously appealed to Kaṁsa: My dear brother, all good fortune unto you. Don't kill this girl. She will be your daughter-in-law. Indeed, it is unworthy of you to kill a woman.

COMMENTARY

Devakī was shining with satisfaction because she had been able to hide her son.

kṛpanā: helplessly; indicates Devakī was suffering because she hoped that the baby girl could be saved.

satī: chaste lady; means Devakī was expert in trying to cheat Kaṁsa: "This child will be the future bride of your son." Seeing that Kaṁsa was going to take the child by force, Devakī then addressed him as *kalayāṇa* (most auspicious) to indicate that he should not produce inauspiciousness by committing the sin of killing a female child.

|| 10.4.5 ||

bahavo hiṁsitā bhrātaḥ śiśavaḥ pāvakopamāḥ

tvayā daiva-nisṛṣṭena putrikaikā pradīyatām

TRANSLATION

My dear brother, by the influence of destiny you have already killed many babies, each of them as bright and beautiful as fire. But kindly spare this daughter. Give her to me as your gift.

COMMENTARY

Fearing that Kaṁsa would become angry after she criticized him for his cruelty in killing her previous sons, Devakī said, "It is my fate (*daiva-nisṛṣṭena*). What fault is there in you?" She then expressed her pitiful condition, praying that Kaṁsa should not make her arms devoid of the child.

|| 10.4.6 ||

nanv ahaṁ te hy avarajā dīnā hata-sutā prabho

dātum arhasi mandāyā aṅgemāṁ caramāṁ prajām

TRANSLATION

My lord, my brother, I am very poor, being bereft of all my children, but still I am your younger sister, and therefore it would be worthy of you to give me this last child as a gift.

COMMENTARY

aṅga: here means “Oh brother.”

|| 10.4.7 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

upaguhyātmajām evaṁ rudatyā dīna-dīnavat

yācitas tāṁ vinirbhartsya hastād ācicchide khalaḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: Piteously embracing her daughter and crying, Devakī begged Kaṁsa for the child, but he was so cruel that he chastised her and forcibly snatched the child from her hands.

COMMENTARY

ātmajām evaṁ: means “as if the child were her own daughter,” since Devakī was aware that it was not her daughter.

dīna dīnavat: poor woman; Devakī is described as being “like” the most miserable person (*dīna dīnavat*) instead of being the most miserable, because the child was not actually hers. Threatening Devakī, Kaṁsa grabbed the child from her hands.

|| 10.4.8 ||

tāṁ gṛhītvā caraṇayor jāta-mātrāṁ svasuḥ sutām

apothayac chilā-pṛṣṭhe svārthonmūlita-sauhṛdaḥ

TRANSLATION

Having uprooted all relationships with his sister because of intense selfishness, Kaṁsa, who was sitting on his knees, grasped the newborn child by the legs and tried to dash her against the surface of a stone.

COMMENTARY

apothayet: smashed; Kaṁsa threw the child down with great force.

|| 10.4.9 ||

sā tad-dhastāt samutpatya sadyo devy ambaraṁ gatā

adṛśyatānujā viṣṇoḥ sāyudhāṣṭa-mahābhujā

TRANSLATION

The child, Yogamāyā-devī, the younger sister of Lord Viṣṇu, slipped upward from Kaṁsa's hands and appeared in the sky as Devī, the goddess Durgā, with eight arms, completely equipped with weapons.

COMMENTARY

As Yogamāyā was falling to the ground, she forcefully leaped into the sky. The *Bhaviṣya-uttara Purāṇa* says that Yogamāyā (Durgā) put her foot on Kaṁsa's head as she went up into the sky. She is described here as the younger sister (*anujā*) of Kṛṣṇa, indicating that Kṛṣṇa as well as Yogamāyā were born from Yaśodā. She held weapons in her eight arms to frighten Kaṁsa.

|| 10.4.10-11 ||

divya-srag-ambarālepa-ratnābharaṇa-bhūṣitā

dhanuḥ-śūleṣu-carmāsi-śaṅkha-cakra-gadā-dharā

siddha-cāraṇa-gandharvair apsaraḥ-kinnaroragaiḥ

upāhṛtoru-balibhiḥ stūyamānedam abravīt

TRANSLATION

The goddess Durgā was decorated with flower garlands, smeared with sandalwood pulp and dressed with excellent garments and ornaments made of valuable jewels. Holding in her hands a bow, a trident, arrows, a shield, a sword, a conchshell, a disc and a club, and being praised by celestial beings like Apsarās, Kinnaras, Uragas, Siddhas, Cāraṇas and Gandharvas, who worshiped her with all kinds of presentations, she spoke as follows.

|| 10.4.12 ||

kiṁ mayā hatayā manda jātaḥ khalu tavānta-kṛt

yatra kva vā pūrva-śatrur mā hiṁsīḥ kṛpaṇān vṛthā

TRANSLATION

O Kaṁsa, you fool, what will be the use of killing me? The Supreme Personality of Godhead, who has been your enemy from the very beginning and who will certainly kill you, has already taken His birth somewhere else. Therefore, do not unnecessarily kill other children.

COMMENTARY

The goddess Durgā said, “Kaṁsa, what can you gain from killing me? If you kill me, you still cannot prevent your own death. He who will kill you has already been born somewhere else (*yatra kva vā*), which cannot be revealed to you.”

kṛpaṇam: refers to Devakī who is suffering. Another reading is *kṛpaṇān*, which refers to many poor babies. The sentence would then read, “You should not kill poor innocent children,” instead of “You should not kill poor Devakī,”

|| 10.4.13 ||

iti prabhāṣya taṁ devī māyā bhagavatī bhuvi

bahu-nāma-niketeṣu bahu-nāmā babhūva ha

TRANSLATION

After speaking to Kaṁsa in this way, the goddess Durgā, Yogamāyā, appeared in different places, such as Vārāṇasī, and became celebrated by different names, such as Annapūrṇā, Durgā, Kālī and Bhadrā.

COMMENTARY

niketeṣu: different places; Māyādevi or goddess Durgā became famous by many names in different places such as Vārāṇasī.

|| 10.4.14 ||

tayābhihitam ākarṇya kaṁsaḥ parama-vismitaḥ

devakīṁ vasudevaṁ ca vimucya praśrito 'bravīt

TRANSLATION

After hearing the words of the goddess Durgā, Kaṁsa was struck with wonder. Thus he approached his sister Devakī and brother-in-law Vasudeva, released them immediately from their shackles, and very humbly spoke as follows.

COMMENTARY

parama vismitah: wonderstruck; In great astonishment, Kaṁsa thought, "How could a mere mortal like Devakī give birth to Durgā-devī? But then how could Durgā's words be false?"

|| 10.4.15 ||

aho bhaginy aho bhāma mayā vāṁ bata pāpmanā

puruṣāda ivāpatyaṁ bahavo hiṁsitāḥ sutāḥ

TRANSLATION

Alas, my sister! Alas, my brother-in-law! I am indeed so sinful that exactly like a man-eater [Rākṣasa] who eats his own child, I have killed so many sons born of you.

COMMENTARY

Kaṁsa tries to pacify Devakī and Vasudeva in the following verses, *bhāma:* brother-in-law; *puruṣāda: rākṣasa*, man-eater; "Just as a *rākṣasa* kills his own children, I have killed many of your sons."

|| 10.4.16 ||

sa tv ahaṁ tyakta-kāruṇyas tyakta-jñāti-suhṛt khalaḥ

kān lokān vai gamiṣyāmi brahma-heva mṛtaḥ śvasan

TRANSLATION

Being merciless and cruel, I have forsaken all my relatives and friends. Therefore, like a person who has killed a brāhmaṇa, I do not know to which planet I shall go, either after death or while breathing.

|| 10.4.17 ||

daivam apy anṛtaṁ vakti na martyā eva kevalam

yad-viśrambhād ahaṁ pāpaḥ svasur nihatavāñ chiśūn

TRANSLATION

Alas, not only human beings but sometimes even providence lies. And I am so sinful that I believed the omen of providence and killed so many of my sister's children.

|| 10.4.18 ||

mā śocataṁ mahā-bhāgāv ātmajān sva-kṛtaṁ bhujaḥ

jāntavo na sadaikatra daivādhīnās tadāsate

TRANSLATION

O great souls, your children have suffered their own misfortune. Therefore, please do not lament for them. All living entities are under the control of the Supreme, and they cannot always live together.

COMMENTARY

mahā bhāgau: fortunate; Kaṁsa said, "Devakī, you are very fortunate because Durgādevī has come as your daughter. You should not lament for your sons who have reaped the results of their actions. Even considering that they lived, living entities cannot remain together for very long."

|| 10.4.19 ||

bhuvi bhaumāni bhūtāni yathā yānty apayānti ca

nāyam ātmā tathaiteṣu viparyeti yathaiva bhūḥ

TRANSLATION

In this world, we can see that pots, dolls and other products of the earth appear, break and then disappear, mixing with the earth. Similarly, the bodies of all conditioned living entities are annihilated, but the living entities, like the earth itself, are unchanging and never annihilated [na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre [Bg. 2.20].

COMMENTARY

Kaṁsa continues, "You should not lament after considering the difference between the soul and matter. Just as clay pots are created and destroyed, the bodies of the individual living entities are created and destroyed. As the earth itself is not affected by these changes, similarly the living entity is not affected, though the material bodies undergo change."

|| 10.4.20 ||

yathānevaṁ-vido bhedo yata ātma-viparyayaḥ

deha-yoga-viyogau ca saṁsṛtir na nivartate

TRANSLATION

One who does not understand the constitutional position of the body and the soul [ātmā] becomes too attached to the bodily concept of life. Consequently, because of attachment to the body and its by-products, he feels affected by union with and separation from his family, society and nation. As long as this continues, one continues his material life. [Otherwise, one is liberated.]

COMMENTARY

"Due to ignorance of their spiritual identity most people think they are the body, and thus perceive differences because of different bodies. Because of this (*yatah*) they think that they undergo change with birth and death (*ātma-viparyayaḥ*). Thus they feel happy when united with their sons, and experience suffering when separated from their sons. This is called *saṁsṛti*."

|| 10.4.21 ||

tasmād bhadre sva-tanayān mayā vyāpāditān api

mānuśoca yataḥ sarvaḥ sva-kṛtaṁ vindate ’vaśaḥ

TRANSLATION

My dear sister Devakī, all good fortune unto you! Everyone suffers and enjoys the results of his own work under the control of providence. Therefore, although your sons have unfortunately been killed by me, please do not lament for them.

COMMENTARY

Kaṁsa continues, “The sons killed by me are sons from the external point of view due to bodily identification. Therefore do not grieve. I have only killed the bodies of your sons, so I should not be blamed. If you say, ‘I do not have such knowledge of the soul,’ then still you should not grieve. According to the view of the *karma-vādīs* (fruitive workers) taking shelter of ignorance, all souls are forced to experience the results of their actions, even though they do not desire it.

|| 10.4.22 ||

yāvad dhato ’smi hantāsmī-ty ātmānaṁ manyate ’sva-dṛk

tāvat tad-abhimāny ajño bādhya-bādhakatām iyāt

TRANSLATION

In the bodily conception of life, one remains in darkness, without self-realization, thinking, “I am being killed” or “I have killed my enemies.” As long as a foolish person thus considers the self to be the killer of the killed, he continues to be responsible for material obligations, and consequently he suffers the reactions of happiness and distress.

COMMENTARY

From the viewpoint of a jñāni, Kaṁsa tries to show that he is not the killer of her sons. “The ignorant see only the body and they do not see the soul (*a sva dṛk*). Since I do not identify with the body, I incur no sin nor get any bondage of karma for killing the children.”

|| 10.4.23 ||

kṣamadhvaṁ mama daurātmyaṁ sādhavo dīna-vatsalāḥ

ity uktvāśru-mukhaḥ pādau śyālaḥ svasror athāgrahīt

TRANSLATION

Kaṁsa begged, "My dear sister and brother-in-law, please be merciful to such a poor-hearted person as me, since both of you are saintly persons. Please excuse my atrocities." Having said this, Kaṁsa fell at the feet of Vasudeva and Devakī, his eyes full of tears of regret.

COMMENTARY

"You may choose to continue grieving while blaming me for the death of your sons. But in reality I did not commit this sinful act consciously even though I am a wicked person. My atonement is only by your mercy." Thus Kaṁsa says to Vasudeva and Devakī, "Please forgive me."

śyālaḥ: brother-in-law; the word indicates Kaṁsa. *svasro:* sister; is a dual form of the word which indicates the sister and her husband, Devakī and Vasudeva. Kaṁsa touched both of their feet.

|| 10.4.24 ||

mocayām āsa nigaḍād viśrabdhaḥ kanyakā-girā

devakīṁ vasudevaṁ ca darśayann ātma-sauhṛdam

TRANSLATION

Fully believing in the words of the goddess Durgā, Kaṁsa exhibited his familial affection for Devakī and Vasudeva by immediately releasing them from their iron shackles.

COMMENTARY

Fully believing in Durgā's words, Kaṁsa showed his friendship by immediately releasing Vasudeva and Devakī from their iron shackles (*nigaḍa*).

|| 10.4.25 ||

bhrātuḥ samanutaptasya kṣānta-roṣā ca devakī

vyasṛjad vasudevaś ca prahasya tam uvāca ha

TRANSLATION

When Devakī saw her brother actually repentant while explaining ordained events, she was relieved of all anger. Similarly, Vasudeva was also free from anger. Smiling, he spoke to Kaṁsa as follows.

COMMENTARY

roṣā ca: anger; indicates lamentation as well as anger. Devakī forgave Kaṁsa for his offenses and gave up her anger.

|| 10.4.26 ||

evam etan mahā-bhāga yathā vadasi dehinām

ajñāna-prabhavāhaṁ-dhīḥ sva-pareti bhidā yataḥ

TRANSLATION

O great personality Kaṁsa, only by the influence of ignorance does one accept the material body and bodily ego. What you have said about this philosophy is correct. Persons in the bodily concept of life, lacking self-realization, differentiate in terms of "This is mine" and "This belongs to another."

COMMENTARY

Because of (*yataḥ*) the spell of false identity, one thinks of objects as mine (*sva para iti bhida*). In this way one thinks in terms of duality.

|| 10.4.27 ||

śoka-harṣa-bhaya-dveṣa-lobha-moha-madānvitāḥ

mitho ghnantaṁ na paśyanti bhāvair bhāvaṁ pṛthag-dṛśaḥ

TRANSLATION

Persons with the vision of differentiation are imbued with the material qualities lamentation, jubilation, fear, envy, greed, illusion and madness. They are influenced by the immediate cause, which they are busy counteracting, because they have no knowledge of the remote, supreme cause, the Personality of Godhead.

COMMENTARY

Those with external material vision cannot see that the Supreme Lord arranges that some entities and forces, such as kings, tigers and disease are killing others such as men and cows.

|| 10.4.28 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

kaṁsa evaṁ prāsannābhyāṁ viśuddhaṁ pratibhāṣitaḥ

devakī-vasudevābhyām anujñāto ’viśad gṛham

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: Thus having been addressed in purity by Devakī and Vasudeva, who were very much appeased, Kaṁsa felt pleased, and with their permission he entered his home.

COMMENTARY

viśuddhaṁ: purity; Vasudeva and Devakī spoke very sincerely to Kaṁsa with pleasing words (*viśuddhaṁ*). Another reading of the word is *visraddham*. In that case, it means that they spoke in such a way to gain Kaṁsa’s trust.

|| 10.4.29 ||

tasyāṁ rātryāṁ vyatītāyāṁ kaṁsa āhūya mantriṇaḥ

tebhya ācaṣṭa tat sarvaṁ yad uktaṁ yoga-nidrayā

TRANSLATION

After that night passed, Kaṁsa summoned his ministers and informed them of all that had been spoken by Yogamāyā [who had revealed that He who was to slay Kaṁsa had already been born somewhere else].

|| 10.4.30 ||

ākarṇya bhartur gaditaṁ tam ūcur deva-śatravaḥ

devān prati kṛtāmarṣā daiteyā nāti-kovidāḥ

TRANSLATION

After hearing their master's statement, the envious asuras, who were enemies of the demigods and were not very expert in their dealings, advised Kaṁsa as follows.

COMMENTARY

nati kovidah: means ignorant, *ati*: refers to qualification. The demons, devoid of the qualification of knowledge, heard Kaṁsa's words, became angry with the demigods, and then began to speak.

|| 10.4.31 ||

evaṁ cet tarhi bhojendra pura-grāma-vrajādiṣu

anirdaśān nirdaśāṁś ca haniṣyāmo 'dya vai śiśūn

TRANSLATION

If this is so, O King of the Bhoja dynasty, beginning today we shall kill all the children born in all the villages, towns and pasturing grounds within the past ten days or slightly more.

COMMENTARY

anirdaśān: means children less than ten days old. *nirdaśān*: refers to children more than ten days old. The demons proclaimed, "Today, we will kill all children, over and under ten days old."

|| 10.4.32 ||

kim udyamaiḥ kariṣyanti devāḥ samara-bhīravaḥ

nityam udvigna-manaso jyā-ghoṣair dhanuṣas tava

TRANSLATION

The demigods always fear the sound of your bowstring. They are constantly in anxiety, afraid of fighting. Therefore, what can they do by their endeavors to harm you?

|| 10.4.33 ||

asyatas te śara-vrātair hanyamānāḥ samantataḥ

jijīviṣava utsṛjya palāyana-parā yayuḥ

TRANSLATION

While being pierced by your arrows, which you discharged on all sides, some of them, who were injured by the multitude of arrows but who desired to live, fled the battlefield, intent on escaping.

COMMENTARY

"Being pierced by your arrows (*asyataḥ*), the demigods fled (*utsṛjya*) the battlefield."

|| 10.4.34 ||

kecit prāñjalayo dīnā nyasta-śastrā divaukasaḥ

mukta-kaccha-śikhāḥ kecid bhītāḥ sma iti vādinaḥ

TRANSLATION

Defeated and bereft of all weapons, some of the demigods gave up fighting and praised you with folded hands, and some of them, appearing before you with loosened garments and hair, said, "O lord, we are very much afraid of you."

|| 10.4.35 ||

na tvaṁ vismṛta-śastrāstrān virathān bhaya-saṁvṛtān

haṁsy anyāsakta-vimukhān bhagna-cāpān ayudhyataḥ

TRANSLATION

When the demigods are bereft of their chariots, when they forget how to use weapons, when they are fearful or attached to something other than fighting, or when their bows are broken and they have thus lost the ability to fight, Your Majesty does not kill them.

COMMENTARY

The demons continue speaking to Kaṁsa: "Your sense of righteousness increases the strength of the demigods. Give up this sense of righteousness, for this is not the time for *dharma*."

|| 10.4.36 ||

kiṁ kṣema-śūrair vibudhair asaṁyuga-vikatthanaiḥ

raho-juṣā kiṁ hariṇā śambhunā vā vanaukasā

kim indreṇālpa-vīryeṇa brahmaṇā vā tapasyatā

TRANSLATION

The demigods boast uselessly while away from the battlefield. Only where there is no fighting can they show their prowess. Therefore, from such demigods we have nothing to fear. As for Lord Viṣṇu, He is in seclusion in the core of the hearts of the yogīs. As for Lord Śiva, he has gone to the forest. And as for Lord Brahmā, he is always engaged in austerities and meditation. The other demigods, headed by Indra, are devoid of prowess. Therefore you have nothing to fear.

COMMENTARY

This verse is spoken to show that the demons have no fear of the demigods. "The demigods display courage where there is no danger (*kṣema*), and show pride outside the battlefield by boasting and talking uselessly (*asamyuga vikatthanaih*). Because you are

stronger, you should have no fear of even Hari or Śiva. Hari prefers solitary places (*raho jusa*). Even if the demigods have strength, why do they not come out and fight? Why does Hari hide within the hearts of the people? Why does Śiva stay in the forest in Ilāvṛta Varṣa without mixing with people?"

|| 10.4.37 ||

tathāpi devāḥ sāpatnyān nopekṣyā iti manmahe

tatas tan-mūla-khanane niyuṅkṣvāsmān anuvratān

TRANSLATION

Nonetheless, because of their enmity, our opinion is that the demigods should not be neglected. Therefore, to uproot them completely, engage us in fighting with them, for we are ready to follow you.

COMMENTARY

The demons said to Kaṁsa, "Though the demigods are weak, the enemy cannot be neglected." This is according to *Nītī-sāstra* (civic laws).

|| 10.4.38 ||

yathāmayo 'ṅge samupekṣito nṛbhir na śakyate rūḍha-padaś cikitsitum

yathendriya-grāma upekṣitas tathā ripur mahān baddha-balo na cālyate

TRANSLATION

As a disease, if initially neglected, becomes acute and impossible to cure, or as the senses, if not controlled at first, are impossible to control later, an enemy, if neglected in the beginning, later becomes insurmountable.

COMMENTARY

"As a disease in the body becomes acute (*rūḍha pada*) when neglected, and as senses not brought under control in the beginning become uncontrollable, similarly, a neglected enemy can become strong and defeat us."

|| 10.4.39 ||

mūlaṁ hi viṣṇur devānāṁ yatra dharmaḥ sanātanaḥ

tasya ca brahma-go-viprās tapo yajñāḥ sa-dakṣiṇāḥ

TRANSLATION

The foundation of all the demigods is Lord Viṣṇu, who lives and is worshiped wherever there are religious principles, traditional culture, the Vedas, cows, brāhmaṇas, austerities, and sacrifices with proper remuneration.

COMMENTARY

mūlam: root, foundation; that which gives life is the root. "The root of the demigods is Lord Viṣṇu. The root of Viṣṇu is *dharma*, which is founded upon the *Vedas*."

|| 10.4.40 ||

tasmāt sarvātmanā rājan brāhmaṇān brahma-vādinaḥ

tapasvino yajña-śīlān gāś ca hanmo havir-dughāḥ

TRANSLATION

O King, we, who are your adherents in all respects, shall therefore kill the Vedic brāhmaṇas, the persons engaged in offering sacrifices and austerities, and the cows that supply milk, from which clarified butter is obtained for the ingredients of sacrifice.

COMMENTARY

Among these, killing the *brāhmaṇa* will bring about the end of religious culture. Therefore the demon speaks this verse: "Ghee, which is necessary for sacrifice (*yajña*), comes from the cows, so we should kill the cows."

|| 10.4.41 ||

viprā gāvaś ca vedāś ca tapaḥ satyaṁ damaḥ śamaḥ

śraddhā dayā titikṣā ca kratavaś ca hares tanūḥ

TRANSLATION

The brāhmaṇas, the cows, Vedic knowledge, austerity, truthfulness, control of the mind and senses, faith, mercy, tolerance and sacrifice are the different parts of the body of Lord Viṣṇu, and they are the paraphernalia for a godly civilization.

|| 10.4.42 ||

sa hi sarva-surādhyakṣo hy asura-dviḍ guhā-śayaḥ

tan-mūlā devatāḥ sarvāḥ seśvarāḥ sa-catur-mukhāḥ

ayaṁ vai tad-vadhopāyo yad ṛṣīṇāṁ vihiṁsanam

TRANSLATION

Lord Viṣṇu, the Supersoul within the core of everyone's heart, is the ultimate enemy of the asuras and is therefore known as asura-dviṭ. He is the leader of all the demigods because all the demigods, including Lord Śiva and Lord Brahmā, exist under His protection. The great saintly persons, sages and Vaiṣṇavas also depend upon Him. To persecute the Vaiṣṇavas, therefore, is the only way to kill Viṣṇu.

COMMENTARY

"We can kill Viṣṇu by killing the *brāhmaṇas*, because the saintly people are the root of Viṣṇu who is the root of all things."

|| 10.4.43 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

evaṁ durmantribhiḥ kaṁsaḥ saha sammantrya durmatiḥ

brahma-hiṁsāṁ hitaṁ mene kāla-pāśāvṛto 'suraḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: Thus, having considered the instructions of his bad ministers, Kaṁsa, who was bound by the laws of Yamarāja and devoid of good intelligence because he was a demon, decided to persecute the saintly persons, the brāhmaṇas, as the only way to achieve his own good fortune.

|| 10.4.44 ||

sandiśya sādhu-lokasya kadane kadana-priyān

kāma-rūpa-dharān dikṣu dānavān gṛham āviśat

TRANSLATION

These demons, the followers of Kaṁsa, were expert at persecuting others, especially the Vaiṣṇavas, and could assume any form they desired. After giving these demons permission to go everywhere and persecute the saintly persons, Kaṁsa entered his palace.

|| 10.4.45 ||

te vai rajaḥ-prakṛtayas tamasā mūḍha-cetasaḥ

satāṁ vidveṣam ācerur ārād āgata-mṛtyavaḥ

TRANSLATION

Surcharged with passion and ignorance and not knowing what was good or bad for them, the asuras, for whom impending death was waiting, began the persecution of the saintly persons.

COMMENTARY

ārād āgata-mṛtyavaḥ: soon overtaken by death; By these words Śukadeva pacifies the fearful Mahārāja Parīkṣit. “The passionate followers of Kaṁsa, whose minds were bewildered by ignorance and whose death was fast approaching, began to torment the brāhmaṇas.”

|| 10.4.46 ||

āyuḥ śriyaṁ yaśo dharmaṁ lokān āśiṣa eva ca

hanti śreyāṁsi sarvāṇi puṁso mahad-atikramaḥ

TRANSLATION

My dear King, when a man persecutes great souls, all his benedictions of longevity, beauty, fame, religion, blessings and promotion to higher planets will be destroyed.

Thus ends the commentary on the Fourth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Five

The Meeting of Nanda Mahārāja and Vasudeva

|| 10.5.1-2 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

nandas tv ātmaja utpanne jātāhlādo mahā-manāḥ

āhūya viprān veda-jñān snātaḥ śucir alaṅkṛtaḥ

vācayitvā svastyayanaṁ jāta-karmātmajasya vai

kārayām āsa vidhivat pitṛ-devārcanaṁ tathā

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Nanda Mahārāja was naturally very magnanimous, and when Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa appeared as his son, he was overwhelmed by jubilation. Therefore, after bathing and purifying himself and dressing himself properly, he invited brāhmaṇas who knew how to recite Vedic mantras. After having these qualified brāhmaṇas recite auspicious Vedic hymns, he arranged to have the Vedic birth ceremony celebrated for his newborn child according to the rules and regulations, and he also arranged for worship of the demigods and forefathers.

COMMENTARY

This chapter describes the festivities at Kṛṣṇa's birth, going to Mathurā to pay tax and the conversation between Nanda and Vasudeva.

Although Vasudeva was completely overjoyed over the birth of his son, due to fear of Kaṁsa he could not celebrate the birth in Mathurā with the *jāta karma* ceremony (cutting of the umbilical cord).

nandas tv ātmaja: the birth of Nanda's son; But (*tu*) when Nanda's son was born, he joyfully celebrated the birth with *svasti-vācana* and other auspicious ceremonies. The use of the word "*tu*" indicates the difference in the birth celebration, but it also indicates that Kṛṣṇa was born in Nanda's house as well as in Mathurā. This proof is established in the *Hari-vaṁsa*: "In the eighth month on the eighth *tithi*, before the pregnancy was complete, both Devakī and Yaśodā gave birth at the same time."

The word *tu* is not used merely to complete the meter of the śloka, because the meaning of the sentence is complete without the word tu. Nor should it be argued that "*tu*" is a meaningless word. The natural conclusion is that the word *tu* means that Kṛṣṇa was born from Yaśodā's womb as the son of Nanda. The *jāta karma* ceremony takes place only after cutting the umbilical cord. How could there be a child born with the umbilical cord already cut, which would be the case if Kṛṣṇa were Vasudeva's child?

The fact that Kṛṣṇa is actually the son of Yaśodā is mentioned in many *sāstras*. Therefore, it should not be claimed that these statements do not represent the real meaning of the words in this verse. For example, in Chapter Four verse nine of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, Māyādevī is mentioned Kṛṣṇa's younger sister because she was born to Yaśodā after Him. In Chapter Eight verse thirty-four, Garga Muni tells Nanda Mahārāja that previously Nanda's son was born in Vasudeva's house. In Chapter Fourteen verse one, Lord Brahmā says that Kṛṣṇa was born from a limb of Nanda. Besides the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, other scriptures address Kṛṣṇa as the son of a cowherd woman. In the *Gautamīya-tantra* Kṛṣṇa is called Yaśodanaṇdana, the son of Yaśodā. *Krama-dīpikā* refers to Kṛṣṇa as the son of the cowherder named Nanda, "*nanda gopa tanaya*." Poetic works describe Kṛṣṇa as the son of Nanda, *nanda-putra*.

One may argue that these names and others such Nandanandana, Subala-sakha, Gopīkanta are merely expressions of *prema*, indicating Kṛṣṇa's dear submission to Nanda Mahārāja. They do not prove that Kṛṣṇa is the son of Yaśodā and Nanda Mahārāja. There are also names such as Vasudevanandana, Arjuna-sakha and Rukminikanta, which express *prema* mixed with *aiśvarya*, majesty. These terms are used simply to express different degrees of love. Otherwise, Varāhadeva should be well known as the son of Brahmā, and Parīkṣit should be known as the son of Uttarā. Thus

Kṛṣṇa has different names according to the mood of love of His devotee. Therefore, Nanda and Yaśodā's referring to Kṛṣṇa as Yaśodanandana does not indicate that they believe Kṛṣṇa is their son.

One cannot say however that Nanda and Yaśodā's thinking of Kṛṣṇa as their son out of love alone gives rise to these names, because such thinking cannot overpower the actual facts. It cannot be that causeless *prema* is caused simply by causal thinking (of things which are not true). If one thinks of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa as an ordinary *jīva* that does not make the Lord a *jīva*. And speaking what appears to be false, as in the pastime of Kṛṣṇa denying His eating of earth, can give rise to the highest truth for the devotee: the fact that Kṛṣṇa had millions of universes in his mouth. Kṛṣṇa's words, though apparently lies, actually become the highest truth. This is most praiseworthy, worshipable and love-inspiring for the spiritualist.

jatāhlādo: overwhelmed in jubilation; Joy also took birth because of the birth of the child. This word is a literary ornament of metaphor. Nanda had others perform Kṛṣṇa's birth rituals because he was unable to do so, due to being overwhelmed with joy over the birth of his son.

|| 10.5.3 ||

dhenūnāṁ niyute prādād viprebhyaḥ samalaṅkṛte

tilādrīn sapta ratnaugha-śātakaumbhāmbarāvṛtān

TRANSLATION

Nanda Mahārāja gave two million cows, completely decorated with cloth and jewels, in charity to the brāhmaṇas. He also gave them seven hills of grain, covered with jewels and with cloth decorated with golden embroidery.

COMMENTARY

niyuta means twenty times one hundred thousand or two million.

tilādrīn: mountain of Śeṣame seeds; The *Bhaviṣya-uttara Purāṇa* describes this as follows: first class *tilādrī* is ten *drones*, second class *tilādrī* is five *drones* and third class *tilādrī* is three *dronas*. 256 *palas* make one *drona* and 4 *tolas* make one *pala*. Thus in one *drona* there are 1024 *tolas*.

|| 10.5.4 ||

kālena snāna-śaucābhyāṁ saṁskārais tapasejyayā

śudhyanti dānaiḥ santuṣṭyā dravyāṇy ātmātma-vidyayā

TRANSLATION

O King, by the passing of time, land and other material possessions are purified; by bathing, the body is purified; and by being cleansed, unclean things are purified. By purificatory ceremonies, birth is purified; by austerity, the senses are purified; and by worship and charity offered to the brāhmaṇas, material possessions are purified. By satisfaction, the mind is purified; and by self-realization, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the soul is purified.

COMMENTARY

The traditional methods of purification of the new born child are here listed using the literary device of *dipika alankara* (listing many things to make an idea clear). Articles are purified by time and other means. Time purifies roads and bathing *ghatas*; bathing purifies the body; scrubbing purifies things touched by contami-nating substances; Vedic *saṁskāras* purify birth; austerity purifies the senses; *yajñas* purify *brāhmaṇas*: charity purifies wealth; satisfaction purifies the mind, and self-realization purifies the soul.

|| 10.5.5 ||

saumaṅgalya-giro viprāḥ sūta-māgadha-vandinaḥ

gāyakāś ca jagur nedur bheryo dundubhayo muhuḥ

TRANSLATION

The brāhmaṇas recited auspicious Vedic hymns, which purified the environment by their vibration. The experts in reciting old histories like the Purāṇas, the experts in reciting the histories of royal families, and general reciters all chanted, while singers sang and many kinds of musical instruments, like bherīs and dundubhis, played in accompaniment.

COMMENTARY

saumaṅgalya-giro: most auspicious singing; The *brāhmaṇas*, who had the power to invoke auspiciousness, gave blessings. The Sūtas and others sang. A Sūta is a professional reciter of the old histories; a Māgadha praises the histories of royal dynasties, and a Vandi sings prayers according to the situation.

|| 10.5.6 ||

vrajaḥ sammṛṣṭa-saṁsikta-dvārājira-gṛhāntaraḥ

citra-dhvaja-patākā-srak-caila-pallava-toraṇaiḥ

TRANSLATION

Vrajapura, the residence of Nanda Mahārāja, was fully decorated with varieties of festoons and flags, and in different places, gates were made with varieties of flower garlands, pieces of cloth, and mango leaves. The courtyards, the gates near the roads, and everything within the rooms of the houses were perfectly swept and washed with water.

COMMENTARY

The doors, yards and interiors of the houses of Vraja were first scrubbed, and then sprinkled with sandalwood and flower-scented water. The doors were decorated with colorful flags, and three types of gates made from garlands, cloth and leaves.

|| 10.5.7 ||

gāvo vṛṣā vatsatarā haridrā-taila-rūṣitāḥ

vicitra-dhātu-barhasrag-vastra-kāñcana-mālinaḥ

TRANSLATION

The cows, the bulls and the calves were thoroughly smeared with a mixture of turmeric and oil, mixed with varieties of minerals. Their heads were bedecked with peacock feathers, and they were garlanded and covered with cloth and golden ornaments.

COMMENTARY

ruṣitāḥ: means anointed with.

|| 10.5.8 ||

mahārha-vastrābharaṇa-kañcukoṣṇīṣa-bhūṣitāḥ

gopāḥ samāyayū rājan nānopāyana-pāṇayaḥ

TRANSLATION

O King Parīkṣit, the cowherd men dressed very opulently with valuable ornaments and garments such as coats and turbans. Decorated in this way and carrying various presentations in their hands, they approached the house of Nanda Mahārāja.

|| 10.5.9 ||

gopyaś cākarṇya muditā yaśodāyāḥ sutodbhavam

ātmānaṁ bhūṣayāṁ cakrur vastrākalpāñjanādibhiḥ

TRANSLATION

The gopī wives of the cowherd men were very pleased to hear that mother Yaśodā had given birth to a son, and they began to decorate themselves very nicely with proper dresses, ornaments, black ointment for the eyes, and so on.

COMMENTARY

gopyaś: refers chiefly to the sisters-in-law of Yaśodā, as well as others.

|| 10.5.10 ||

nava-kuṅkuma-kiñjalka-mukha-paṅkaja-bhūtayaḥ

balibhis tvaritaṁ jagmuḥ pṛthu-śroṇyaś calat-kucāḥ

TRANSLATION

Their lotuslike faces extraordinarily beautiful, being decorated with saffron and newly grown kuṅkuma, the wives of the cowherd men hurried to the house of mother Yaśodā with presentations in their hands. Because of natural beauty, the wives had full hips and full breasts, which moved as they hurried along.

COMMENTARY

The lotus faces of the *gopīs* were splendid with new *kuṅkuma* powder.

balibhih: indicates putting gold coins, jewel necklaces, expensive cloth, fruits such as coconut, rice, *durva* grass, sandalwood and garlands on a gold tray covered with a golden cloth, and holding it in the left hand. Though the Vrajagopīs had heavy hips, they moved quickly because of joy and enthusiasm to see baby Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.5.11 ||

gopyaḥ sumṛṣṭa-maṇi-kuṇḍala-niṣka-kaṇṭhyaś

citrāmbarāḥ pathi śikhā-cyuta-mālya-varṣāḥ

nandālayaṁ sa-valayā vrajatīr virejur

vyālola-kuṇḍala-payodhara-hāra-śobhāḥ

TRANSLATION

In the ears of the gopīs were brilliantly polished jeweled earrings, and from their necks hung metal lockets. Their hands were decorated with bangles, their dresses were of varied colors, and from their hair, flowers fell onto the street like showers. Thus while going to the house of Mahārāja Nanda, the gopīs, their earrings, breasts and garlands moving, were brilliantly beautiful.

COMMENTARY

Though the beauty of the *gopīs* has been described already, because of their great devotion, and because he felt somewhat unsatisfied with that description alone, Śukadeva elaborates further.

śikhā: refers to the *gopīs*' tied up hair. *vrajatīh:* means while going.

|| 10.5.12 ||

tā āśiṣaḥ prayuñjānāś ciraṁ pāhīti bālake

haridrā-cūrṇa-tailādbhiḥ siñcantyo 'janam ujjaguḥ

TRANSLATION

Offering blessings to the newborn child, Kṛṣṇa, the wives and daughters of the cowherd men said, "May You become the King of Vraja and long maintain all its

inhabitants." They sprinkled a mixture of turmeric powder, oil and water upon the birthless Supreme Lord and offered their prayers.

COMMENTARY

Entering the maternity ward, the Vraja-gopīs said, "May You protect us." This means that, Kṛṣṇa, who is the son of the king, should protect them when He assumes the throne. Another reading; Out of parental affection the *gopīs* offered Kṛṣṇa a blessing saying, *ciran jīva*, "May You live a long life." Then going outside, the elderly *gopīs* celebrated Kṛṣṇa's birth by singing loudly, and sprinkling each other with a mixture of oil, water and turmeric.

|| 10.5.13 ||

avādyanta vicitrāṇi vāditrāṇi mahotsave

kṛṣṇe viśveśvare 'nante nandasya vrajam āgate

TRANSLATION

Now that the all-pervading, unlimited Lord Kṛṣṇa, the master of the cosmic manifestation, had arrived within the estate of Mahārāja Nanda, various types of musical instruments resounded to celebrate the great festival.

COMMENTARY

viśveśvare: lord of the universe. Because the Supreme Lord of the cosmic manifestation had appeared, musical instruments resounded throughout the three worlds: Svarga, earth and hell. *anante:* unlimi-ted. Because Kṛṣṇa is unlimited, unlimited musical instruments began to sound.

|| 10.5.14 ||

gopāḥ parasparaṁ hṛṣṭā dadhi-kṣīra-ghṛtāmbubhiḥ

āsiñcanto vilimpanto navanītaiś ca cikṣipuḥ

TRANSLATION

In gladness, the cowherd men enjoyed the great festival by splashing one another's bodies with a mixture of curd, condensed milk, butter and water. They threw butter on one another and smeared it on one another's bodies.

COMMENTARY

cikṣipuḥ: throw. In a joking mood the *gopas* energetically threw milk, yogurt, ghee and water on each other. *Cikṣipuḥ* can mean the cowherd men began to fall on the slippery earth, since *kṣip* means moving the feet as well as the hands.

|| 10.5.15-16 ||

nando mahā-manās tebhyo vāso 'laṅkāra-go-dhanam

sūta-māgadha-vandibhyo ye 'nye vidyopajīvinaḥ

tais taiḥ kāmair adīnātmā yathocitam apūjayat

viṣṇor ārādhanārthāya sva-putrasyodayāya ca

TRANSLATION

The great-minded Mahārāja Nanda gave clothing, ornaments and cows in charity to the cowherd men in order to please Lord Viṣṇu, and thus he improved the condition of his own son in all respects. He distributed charity to the sūtas, the māgadhas, the vandīs, and men of all other professions, according to their educational qualifications, and satisfied everyone's desires.

COMMENTARY

mahāmanaḥ: means very generous. Nanda Mahārāja, who was very charitable, gave lavishly to all in attendance. *vidyopajīvinaḥ:* educated professionals; refers to those who made a living by dancing, singing and playing instruments, teaching scriptures and the use of weapons. *tais taiḥ kāmaih:* means whatever was desired or asked. Nanda Mahārāja gave suitably according to the level of one's knowledge and reputation. Since all in attendance were devotees of Viṣṇu, Nanda Mahārāja gave them charity in order to please Lord Viṣṇu, and thereby bring happiness and auspiciousness to his newborn child.

Nanda Mahārāja thought, “May Viṣṇu be pleased by this charity, and by His pleasure my son will be blessed.”

|| 10.5.17 ||

rohiṇī ca mahā-bhāgā nanda-gopābhinanditā

vyacarad divya-vāsa-srak-kaṇṭhābharaṇa-bhūṣitā

TRANSLATION

The most fortunate Rohiṇī, the mother of Baladeva, was honored by Nanda Mahārāja and Yaśodā, and thus she also dressed gorgeously and decorated herself with a necklace, a garland and other ornaments. She was busy wandering here and there to receive the women who were guests at the festival.

COMMENTARY

mahā bhāgā: most fortunate; Rohiṇī is addressed as most fortunate, because among all of Vasudeva’s wives, she alone attained the opportunity to see Kṛṣṇa’s childhood pastimes. *nanda gopā:* means Nandarāja, for the word *gopa* also means king according to the *Amara-kośa* dictionary. Go means earth, as well as cow. *Gopa* means protector of the earth. *abhinanditā:* honored; This means that Nanda praised Rohiṇī saying, “because of your coming here, my child was born.” *Vyacarat* indicates that Rohiṇī went around giving proper respect to the assembled women. Rohiṇī was decorated with beautiful clothing and ornaments given by Nanda and Yaśodā. Absorbed in the bliss of celebrating Kṛṣṇa’s birth, Rohiṇī forgot about her separation from her husband and her sorrow over her husband’s condition in prison.

|| 10.5.18 ||

tata ārabhya nandasya vrajaḥ sarva-samṛddhimān

harer nivāsātma-guṇai ramākrīḍam abhūn nṛpa

TRANSLATION

O Mahārāja Parīkṣit, the home of Nanda Mahārāja is eternally the abode of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and His transcendental qualities and is therefore always naturally endowed with the opulence of all wealth. Yet beginning from Lord Kṛṣṇa’s appearance there, it became the place for the pastimes of the goddess of fortune.

COMMENTARY

It is impossible for even Kuvera to satisfy everyone's desires. How then was it possible for Nanda Mahārāja to accomplish this? This verse answers the question. Vraja, which is Kṛṣṇa's eternal place of residence, always increases in Kṛṣṇa's qualities by its very nature. This started from the birth of Kṛṣṇa, *tata ārabhya*. Kṛṣṇa's home in Nandagrama became the place of pastimes for all wealth. If all wealth began to play in Nanda's house, how was it possible that anything was lacking to give in charity?

|| 10.5.19 ||

gopān gokula-rakṣāyāṁ nirūpya mathurāṁ gataḥ

nandaḥ kaṁsasya vārṣikyaṁ karaṁ dātuṁ kurūdvaha

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: Thereafter, my dear King Parīkṣit, O best protector of the Kuru dynasty, Nanda Mahārāja appointed the local cowherd men to protect Gokula and then went to Mathurā to pay the yearly taxes to King Kaṁsa.

COMMENTARY

Many days after the birth of the great treasure known as his son, Nanda began to think, "In all good fortune there are many impediments." First Nanda Mahārāja satisfied the demigods, forefathers and planets with worship. Then he immediately left for Mathurā with gifts of gold coins, jewels and cloth to give to the evil king Kaṁsa as yearly tax to please him.

|| 10.5.20 ||

vasudeva upaśrutya bhrātaraṁ nandam āgatam

jñātvā datta-karaṁ rājñe yayau tad-avamocanam

TRANSLATION

When Vasudeva heard that Nanda Mahārāja, his very dear friend and brother, had come to Mathurā and already paid the taxes to Kaṁsa, he went to Nanda Mahārāja's residence.

COMMENTARY

King Devamīḍha of the Yadu clan (Yadavas) had two wives, one of a *kṣatriya* family, the other of a vaiśya family. Through the *kṣatriya* wife he bore a son named Sura and through the *vaiśya* wife he bore a son named Parjanya. Sura had a son named Vasudeva, a *kṣatriya*, and Parjanya had a son named Nanda, a cowherd or *vaiśya*.

Thus Vasudeva and Nanda were brothers or cousins, with the same grandfather (a Yadava) and different grandmother. Nanda was therefore a Yadava. In *Skanda Purāṇa*, Kṛṣṇa says, “I lifted Govardhana for the benefit of the Yadavas (Nanda and others).” Kṛṣṇa told His brother Baladeva, “Among all the Yadavas (those living in Mathurā and Vraja), you are the most dear.”

tad avamocanam: loosen the clothes; This phrase means the place where Nanda was residing.

|| 10.5.21 ||

taṁ dṛṣṭvā sahasotthāya dehaḥ prāṇam ivāgatam

prītaḥ priyatamaṁ dorbhyāṁ sasvaje prema-vihvalaḥ

TRANSLATION

When Nanda Mahārāja heard that Vasudeva had come, he was overwhelmed with love and affection, being as pleased as if his body had regained its life. Seeing Vasudeva suddenly present, he got up and embraced him with both arms.

COMMENTARY

When Nanda saw Vasudeva, he embraced him (*sasvaje*), but did not pay obeisances because he was elder to Vasudeva.

|| 10.5.22 ||

pūjitaḥ sukham āsīnaḥ pṛṣṭvānāmayam ādṛtaḥ

prāsakta-dhīḥ svātmajayor idam āha viśāmpate

TRANSLATION

O Mahārāja Parīkṣit, having thus been received and welcomed by Nanda Mahārāja with honor, Vasudeva sat down very peacefully and inquired about his own two sons because of intense love for them.

COMMENTARY

Vasudeva spoke after being welcomed by Nanda.

|| 10.5.23 ||

diṣṭyā bhrātaḥ pravayasa idānīm aprajasya te

prajāśāyā nivṛttasya prajā yat samapadyata

TRANSLATION

My dear brother Nanda Mahārāja, at an advanced age you had no son at all and were hopeless of having one. Therefore, that you now have a son is a sign of great fortune.

COMMENTARY

It would be a lie for Vasudeva to say to Nanda that in old age he had son. To say that he actually had a daughter would not be believed by Nanda. Therefore Vasudeva used the word "*praja*" which can mean offspring, either male or female. This word was also used because Vasudeva was in doubt as to whether Nanda understood that Vasudeva had put his own son in Yaśodā's bed and taken away Nanda's daughter.

|| 10.5.24 ||

diṣṭyā saṁsāra-cakre 'smin vartamānaḥ punar-bhavaḥ

upalabdho bhavān adya durlabhaṁ priya-darśanam

TRANSLATION

It is also by good fortune that I am seeing you. Having obtained this opportunity, I feel as if I have taken birth again. Even though one is present in

this world, to meet with intimate friends and dear relatives in this material world is extremely difficult.

COMMENTARY

"Because I have met you today by good fortune, I have again taken birth in this world. Before meeting you my life was like death."

|| 10.5.25 ||

naikatra priya-saṁvāsaḥ suhṛdāṁ citra-karmaṇām

oghena vyūhyamānānāṁ plavānāṁ srotaso yathā

TRANSLATION

Many planks and sticks, unable to stay together, are carried away by the force of a river's waves. Similarly, although we are intimately related with friends and family members, we are unable to stay together because of our varied past deeds and the waves of time.

COMMENTARY

Anticipating the proposal, "If that is so, then now we can stay together," Vasudeva speaks this verse: "Dear friend, just as twigs and grass cannot stay together in the flow of the river, we also cannot stay together."

|| 10.5.26 ||

kaccit paśavyaṁ nirujaṁ bhūry-ambu-tṛṇa-vīrudham

bṛhad vanaṁ tad adhunā yatrāsse tvaṁ suhṛd-vṛtaḥ

TRANSLATION

My dear friend Nanda Mahārāja, in the place where you are living with your friends, is the forest favorable for the animals, the cows? I hope there is no disease or inconvenience. The place must be full of water, grass and other plants.

COMMENTARY

pasavyam: means beneficial for the animals. *Niirujam* becomes *nirujam* to suit the poetic meter.

|| 10.5.27 ||

bhrātar mama sutaḥ kaccin mātrā saha bhavad-vraje

tātaṁ bhavantaṁ manvāno bhavadbhyām upalālitaḥ

TRANSLATION

My son Baladeva, being raised by you and your wife, Yaśodādevī, considers you His father and mother. Is he living very peacefully in your home with His real mother, Rohiṇī?

COMMENTARY

“Is my child (Balarāma) happy? Does he think of you as His father?”

|| 10.5.28 ||

puṁsas tri-vargo vihitaḥ suhṛdo hy anubhāvitaḥ

na teṣu kliśyamāneṣu tri-vargo ’rthāya kalpate

TRANSLATION

When one’s friends and relatives are properly situated, one’s religion, economic development and sense gratification, as described in the Vedic literatures, are beneficial. Otherwise, if one’s friends and relatives are in distress, these three cannot offer any happiness.

COMMENTARY

To express the fact that his household life was a failure, Vasudeva spoke this verse. “For a man (*puṁsas*) three *vargas* (duties) are prescribed by the scripture for the purpose of satisfying his wife and children (*suhrdaḥ*). In my case, by being separated from wife and child and causing them suffering, and by not raising my son, the three *vargas* are useless. Thus my household life has been a failure.”

|| 10.5.29 ||

śrī-nanda uvāca

aho te devakī-putrāḥ kaṁsena bahavo hatāḥ

ekāvaśiṣṭāvarajā kanyā sāpi divaṁ gatā

TRANSLATION

Nanda Mahārāja said: Alas, King Kaṁsa killed so many of your children, born of Devakī. And your one daughter, the youngest child of all, entered the heavenly planets.

COMMENTARY

“You have asked me questions about Vraja, but what answer can I give? Seeing your suffering, I am suffering even more.” With this in mind, Nanda responds to Vasudeva’s inquiries by describing the death of Vasudeva’s sons and his daughter. Vasudeva was relieved and blissful upon hearing the reply, because he now understood that Nanda had not discovered that his child was placed in Yaśodā’s bed.

|| 10.5.30 ||

nūnaṁ hy adṛṣṭa-niṣṭho ’yam adṛṣṭa-paramo janaḥ

adṛṣṭam ātmanas tattvaṁ yo veda na sa muhyati

TRANSLATION

Every man is certainly controlled by destiny, which determines the results of one’s fruitive activities. In other words, one has a son or daughter because of unseen destiny, and when the son or daughter is no longer present, this also is due to unseen destiny. Destiny is the ultimate controller of everyone. One who knows this is never bewildered.

COMMENTARY

“O brother, though the ocean of calamity is difficult to cross, you can cross it on the boat of discrimination”

With this intention Nanda speaks this verse. “Man is ultimately under the control of destiny (*adṛṣṭa-niṣṭho*). Destiny gives happiness from children, but it also takes it away. Fate is supreme. It bestows children and also takes them away. There is no one equal to

he who knows fate as the cause of happiness and distress. Therefore you should not be in confusion."

|| 10.5.31 ||

śrī-vasudeva uvāca

karo vai vārṣiko datto rājñe dṛṣṭā vayaṁ ca vaḥ

neha stheyaṁ bahu-tithaṁ santy utpātāś ca gokule

TRANSLATION

Vasudeva said to Nanda Mahārāja: Now, my dear brother, since you have paid the annual taxes to Kaṁsa and have also seen me, do not stay in this place for many days. It is better to return to Gokula, since I know that there may be some disturbances there.

COMMENTARY

After hearing this advice from Nanda, Vasudeva spoke what he had come to say, which was a warning: "Certainly (*vai*) you have paid the annual tax to the king. Do not stay here a long time (*bahu titham*), for there are many disturbances in Gokula."

|| 10.5.32 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

iti nandādayo gopāḥ proktās te śauriṇā yayuḥ

anobhir anaḍud-yuktais tam anujñāpya gokulam

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: After Vasudeva advised Nanda Mahārāja in this way, Nanda Mahārāja and his associates, the cowherd men, took permission from Vasudeva, yoked their bulls to the bullock carts, and started riding for Gokula.

Thus ends the commentary on the Fifth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Six

Killing the Demon Pūtanā

|| 10.6.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

nandaḥ pathi vacaḥ śaurer na mṛṣeti vicintayan

hariṁ jagāma śaraṇam utpātāgama-śaṅkitaḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: My dear King, while Nanda Mahārāja was on the way home, he considered that what Vasudeva had said could not be false or useless. There must have been some danger of disturbances in Gokula. As Nanda Mahārāja thought about the danger for his beautiful son, Kṛṣṇa, he was afraid, and he took shelter at the lotus feet of the supreme controller.

COMMENTARY

In this chapter, Pūtanā assumes a beautiful form and appears in Vraja. Upon dying, Pūtanā revealed her actual form of a *rākṣasī*, female eater of human flesh. Nevertheless, Pūtanā attained liberation by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa. Her body is burned and Nanda returns to Vraja from Mathurā.

|| 10.6.2 ||

kaṁsena prahitā ghorā pūtanā bāla-ghātinī

śiśūṁś cacāra nighnantī pura-grāma-vrajādiṣu

TRANSLATION

While Nanda Mahārāja was returning to Gokula, the same fierce

Pūtanā whom Kaṁsa had previously engaged to kill babies was wandering about in the towns, cities and villages, doing her nefarious duty.

|| 10.6.3 ||

na yatra śravaṇādīni rakṣo-ghnāni sva-karmasu

kurvanti sātvatāṁ bhartur yātudhānyaś ca tatra hi

TRANSLATION

My dear King, wherever people in any position perform their occupational duties of devotional service by chanting and hearing [śravaṇaṁ kīrtanaṁ viṣṇoḥ SB 7.5.23], there cannot be any danger from bad elements. Therefore there was no need for anxiety about Gokula while the Supreme Personality of Godhead was personally present.

COMMENTARY

This verse is spoken to allay the fears of Mahārāja Parīkṣit for Kṛṣṇa's safety. In those places where people engage in scriptural duties like sacrifices without devotional acts such as hearing stories of the Lord, who is the life of the devotees, the *rākṣasīs* become powerful. But *rākṣasīs* have no influence where the primary activities are acts of devotion. What to speak of the place where the Lord is personally present?

|| 10.6.4 ||

sā khe-cary ekadotpatya pūtanā nanda-gokulam

yoṣitvā māyayātmānaṁ prāviśat kāma-cāriṇī

TRANSLATION

Once upon a time, Pūtanā Rākṣasī, who could move according to her desire and was wandering in outer space, converted herself by mystic power into a very beautiful woman and thus entered Gokula, the abode of Nanda Mahārāja.

COMMENTARY

To enact the pastime of killing Pūtanā, Kṛṣṇa's *līlā-śakti* inspired Pūtanā to enter Gokula as if invited by death to be killed. With this intention the verse is spoken. One evening, Pūtanā entered Gokula by flying through the sky (*utpatya*). An alternate reading is *upetya,* (arriving). By mystic power Pūtanā took on the form of a beautiful woman (*yoṣitvā*).

All the Vrajavāsīs were so much enamored by Pūtanā's beauty that they gave her access to all the houses in town. Though the Lord's illusory energy has no desire, by the will of the Lord, Pūtanā displayed her illusions just like a magician to bewilder the eternal devotees of Vraja, and to unfold the transcendental pastimes of Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.6.5-6 ||

tāṁ keśa-bandha-vyatiṣakta-mallikāṁ
bṛhan-nitamba-stana-kṛcchra-madhyamām

suvāsasaṁ kalpita-karṇa-bhūṣaṇa-

tviṣollasat-kuntala-maṇḍitānanām

valgu-smitāpāṅga-visarga-vīkṣitair

mano harantīṁ vanitāṁ vrajaukasām

amaṁsatāmbhoja-kareṇa rūpiṇīṁ

gopyaḥ śriyaṁ draṣṭum ivāgatāṁ patim

TRANSLATION

Her hips were full, her breasts were large and firm, seeming to overburden her slim waist, and she was dressed very nicely. Her hair, adorned with a garland of mallikā flowers, was scattered about her beautiful face. Her earrings were brilliant, and as she smiled very attractively, glancing upon everyone, her beauty drew the attention of all the inhabitants of Vraja, especially the men. When the gopīs saw her, they thought that the beautiful goddess of fortune, holding a lotus flower in her hand, had come to see her husband, Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

Seeing that beautiful woman holding a lotus flower in her hands, the *gopīs* concluded that she was Lakṣmī, the embodiment of all wealth and jewels. She must have come to see her husband Nārāyaṇa, the worshipable family Deity of Nanda Mahārāja. Pūtanā

had full hips and large firm breasts which contrasted her thin waist. She was so extremely attractive (*vanita*) that the Vrajavāsīs let her enter the inner chambers of their houses without obstruction.

|| 10.6.7 ||

bāla-grahas tatra vicinvatī śiśūn yadṛcchayā nanda-gṛhe 'sad-antakam

bālaṁ praticchanna-nijoru-tejasaṁ dadarśa talpe 'gnim ivāhitaṁ bhasi

TRANSLATION

While searching for small children, Pūtanā, whose business was to kill them, entered the house of Nanda Mahārāja unobstructed, having been sent by the superior potency of the Lord. Without asking anyone's permission, she entered Nanda Mahārāja's room, where she saw the child sleeping in bed, His unlimited power covered like a powerful fire covered by ashes. She could understand that this child was not ordinary, but was meant to kill all demons.

COMMENTARY

Pūtanā, the killer of children (*bāla graha*, baby catcher) saw the child (*śiśūn*) who, though He Himself is the killer of the wicked (*asad antakam*), appeared easy to kill. At that time, Kṛṣṇa concealed His unlimited powers, just as a fire is sometimes covered by ashes.

|| 10.6.8 ||

vibudhya tāṁ bālaka-mārikā-grahaṁ carācarātmā sa nimīlitekṣaṇaḥ

anantam āropayad aṅkam antakaṁ yathoragaṁ suptam abuddhi-rajju-dhīḥ

TRANSLATION

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the all-pervading Supersoul, lying on the bed, understood that Pūtanā, a witch who was expert in killing small children, had come to kill Him. Therefore, as if afraid of her, Kṛṣṇa closed His eyes. Thus Pūtanā took upon her lap Him who was to be her own annihilation, just as an unintelligent person places a sleeping snake on his lap, thinking the snake to be a rope.

COMMENTARY

This verse shows an opportunity for the Lord's power of omni-science to render service at the time of an approaching evil. Though Kṛṣṇa fully understood Pūtanā's identity, He lay there with His eyes closed like a normal child.

Why did Kṛṣṇa close His eyes? To show His fearfulness as a small child; to avoid seeing such an inauspicious person; to avoid making the violence auspicious by the touch of His auspicious glance; to avoid the shame of killing a woman posing as a mother, and to avoid seeing the inauspiciousness of Pūtanā's death.

Then Pūtanā placed Kṛṣṇa in her lap. Kṛṣṇa is called Ananta, which means without end, and Antakam because He brings about the end. This was an opportunity for Kṛṣṇa's destructive energy to operate. Pūtanā held on her lap that person who is without limit in all space and time. *Antakam* and *ananta* are also contradictory words to express this wonderful mellow known as *adbhuta rasa*. As a foolish person picks up a sleeping snake, thinking it is a rope, similarly, Pūtanā foolishly held Kṛṣṇa, thinking Him an ordinary, helpless child.

|| 10.6.9 ||

tāṁ tīkṣṇa-cittām ativāma-ceṣṭitāṁ vīkṣyāntarā koṣa-paricchadāśivat

vara-striyaṁ tat-prabhayā ca dharṣite nirīkṣyamāṇe jananī hy atiṣṭhatām

TRANSLATION

Pūtanā Rākṣasī's heart was fierce and cruel, but she looked like a very affectionate mother. Thus she resembled a sharp sword in a soft sheath. Although seeing her within the room, Yaśodā and Rohiṇī, overwhelmed by her beauty, did not stop her, but remained silent because she treated the child like a mother.

COMMENTARY

Why did Yaśodā and Rohiṇī not stop Pūtanā? This verse answers the question. Pūtanā acted like a very attentive mother. Externally she was gentle, but inwardly she was cruel. Pūtanā resembled a sharp sword concealed in a soft leather sheath.

tat prabhaya: Overwhelmed by Pūtanā's influence, Yaśodā and Rohiṇī thought that perhaps Ambikā, Indrani or Lakṣmī of the celestial regions had come to feed Kṛṣṇa out of motherly love. Thus they passively watched her pick up the child.

|| 10.6.10 ||

tasmin stanaṁ durjara-vīryam ulbaṇaṁ
ghorāṅkam ādāya śiśor dadāv atha

gāḍhaṁ karābhyāṁ bhagavān prapīḍya tat-
prāṇaiḥ samaṁ roṣa-samanvito 'pibat

TRANSLATION

On that very spot, the fiercely dangerous Rākṣasī took Kṛṣṇa on her lap and pushed her breast into His mouth. The nipple of her breast was smeared with a dangerous, immediately effective poison, but the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, becoming very angry at her, took hold of her breast, squeezed it very hard with both hands, and sucked out both the poison and her life.

COMMENTARY

In that place (*tasmin*) the fierce (*ghora*) woman Pūtanā offered her poisoned besmeared (*durjaram vīryam*) breast to the baby (*śiśor*). Kṛṣṇa held Pūtanā's breast so tightly with His two hands that she could not pull Him away (*gāḍhaṁ prapīḍya*). Kṛṣṇa was filled with anger knowing that Pūtanā planned to kill all the children of Vraja by offering her breast to them. Therefore, Kṛṣṇa's power of destruction, *saṁhāra śakti*, sucked out her impure life. Kṛṣṇa did not personally do this. Though we say a man cuts down the tree, actually it is the axe held by the man that cuts down the tree. Similarly, it is stated that Kṛṣṇa sucked out Pūtanā's life airs, but actually His *saṁhāra śakti* performed the work.

|| 10.6.11 ||

sā muñca muñcālam iti prabhāṣiṇī niṣpīḍyamānākhila-jīva-marmaṇi

vivṛtya netre caraṇau bhujau muhuḥ prasvinna-gātrā kṣipatī ruroda ha

TRANSLATION

Unbearably pressed in every vital point, the demon Pūtanā began to cry, "Please leave me, leave me! Suck my breast no longer!" Perspiring, her eyes wide open and her arms and legs flailing, she cried very loudly again and again.

COMMENTARY

Being squeezed by baby Kṛṣṇa in all her sensitive points, Pūtanā began flailing her hands and legs.

|| 10.6.12 ||

tasyāḥ svanenātigabhīra-raṁhasā sādrir mahī dyauś ca cacāla sa-grahā

rasā diśaś ca pratinedire janāḥ petuḥ kṣitau vajra-nipāta-śaṅkayā

TRANSLATION

As Pūtanā screamed loudly and forcefully, the earth with its mountains, and outer space with its planets, trembled. The lower planets and all directions vibrated, and people fell down, fearing that thunderbolts were falling upon them.

COMMENTARY

Rasā means Rasātala and other lower planets.

|| 10.6.13 ||

iśā-carīttham vyathita-stanā vyasur vyādāya keśāṁś caraṇau bhujāv api

prasārya goṣṭhe nija-rūpam āsthitā vajrāhato vṛtra ivāpatan nṛpa

TRANSLATION

In this way the demon Pūtanā, very much aggrieved because her breast was being attacked by Kṛṣṇa, lost her life. O King Parīkṣit, opening her mouth wide and spreading her arms, legs and hair, she fell down in the pasturing ground in her original form as a Rākṣasī, as Vṛtrāsura had fallen when killed by the thunderbolt of Indra.

COMMENTARY

Because of the pain of death, Pūtanā Rākṣasī could not maintain her disguise as a beautiful woman and reverted to her demoniac form.

|| 10.6.14 ||

atamāno 'pi tad-dehas tri-gavyūty-antara-drumān

cūrṇayām āsa rājendra mahad āsīt tad adbhutam

TRANSLATION

O King Parīkṣit, when the gigantic body of Pūtanā fell to the ground, it smashed all the trees within a limit of twelve miles. Appearing in a gigantic body, she was certainly extraordinary.

COMMENTARY

Due to intense pain, Pūtanā ran out of the house, fled the village and fell down to the ground on the outskirts of Vraja. The word "*api*" signifies that not only while living, but even while dying Pūtanā was killing other living entities. All the trees within an area of *six krośas* (twelve miles) were crushed by the falling body of the gigantic witch. It was remarkable that only the trees were crushed and none of the village houses. According Śrī Jīva Gosvāmi's *Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī-ṭīkā*, these trees, which were laden with pleasurable fruits, were located in Kaṁsa's personal garden.

|| 10.6.15-17 ||

īṣā-mātrogra-daṁṣṭrāsyaṁ giri-kandara-nāsikam

gaṇḍa-śaila-stanaṁ raudraṁ prakīrṇāruṇa-mūrdhajam

andha-kūpa-gabhīrākṣaṁ pulināroha-bhīṣaṇam

baddha-setu-bhujorv-aṅghri śūnya-toya-hradodaram

santatrasuḥ sma tad vīkṣya gopā gopyaḥ kalevaram

pūrvaṁ tu tan-niḥsvanita-bhinna-hṛt-karṇa-mastakāḥ

TRANSLATION

The Rākṣasī's mouth was full of teeth, each resembling the front of a plow, her nostrils were deep like mountain caves, and her breasts resembled big slabs of stone fallen from a hill. Her scattered hair was the color of copper. The sockets of her eyes appeared like deep blind wells, her fearful thighs resembled the banks of a river, her arms, legs and feet seemed like big bridges, and her abdomen appeared like a dried-up lake. The hearts, ears and heads of the cowherd men and women were already shocked by the Rākṣasī's screaming, and when they saw the fierce wonder of her body, they were even more frightened.

COMMENTARY

Seeing her hideous body, the cowherd men and women became frightened. Pūtanā's teeth were as large as ploughshares. Her nostrils were as deep as mountain caves, and her waist was like the bank of a river. Pūtanā's hands, feet and thighs were like bridges and her belly was like a dried up lake. All of this was terrible to see. The hearts, ears and heads of the Vrajavāsīs were already shattered by Pūtanā's screaming, and upon seeing her ghastly form they became more frightened.

|| 10.6.18 ||

bālaṁ ca tasyā urasi krīḍantam akutobhayam

gopyas tūrṇaṁ samabhyetya jagṛhur jāta-sambhramāḥ

TRANSLATION

Without fear, the child Kṛṣṇa was playing on the upper portion of Pūtanā Rākṣasī's breast, and when the gopīs saw the child's wonderful activities, they immediately came forward with great jubilation and picked Him up.

COMMENTARY

Pūtanā's chest was raised like a hill, suitable for playing. The *gopīs* entered the maternity ward, but they did not see Kṛṣṇa there. Yaśodā and Rohiṇī lay on the ground unconscious. Desiring to see Kṛṣṇa, the *gopīs* went outside the house and saw Him playing on Pūtanā.

|| 10.6.19 ||

yaśodā-rohiṇībhyāṁ tāḥ samaṁ bālasya sarvataḥ

rakṣāṁ vidadhire samyag go-puccha-bhramaṇādibhiḥ

TRANSLATION

Thereafter, mother Yaśodā and Rohiṇī, along with the other elderly gopīs, waved about the switch of a cow to give full protection to the child Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

This verse mentions that Yaśodā, Rohiṇī and the other *gopīs* performed rituals of protection. Yaśodā and Rohiṇī did not take a leading role, however, because they were extremely affected by anxiety for Kṛṣṇa's safety. The elderly *gopīs* waved a cow's tail around all of Kṛṣṇa's limbs (*sarvataḥ*) to protect Him. They also offered other items such as mustard seeds, and touched Kṛṣṇa with the edge of the winnowing basket.

|| 10.6.20 ||

go-mūtreṇa snāpayitvā punar go-rajasārbhakam

rakṣāṁ cakruś ca śakṛtā dvādaśāṅgeṣu nāmabhiḥ

TRANSLATION

The child was thoroughly washed with cow urine and then smeared with the dust raised by the movements of the cows. Then different names of the Lord were applied with cow dung on twelve different parts of His body, beginning with the forehead, as done in applying tilaka. In this way, the child was given protection.

COMMENTARY

Using cow dung, they protected Kṛṣṇa by marking twelve places on His body while pronouncing twelve names of Viṣṇu starting with the name Keśava on the forehead, as done in applying *tilaka*.

|| 10.6.21 ||

gopyaḥ saṁspṛṣṭa-salilā aṅgeṣu karayoḥ pṛthak

nyasyātmany atha bālasya bīja-nyāsam akurvata

TRANSLATION

The gopīs first executed the process of ācamana, drinking a sip of water from the right hand. They purified their bodies and hands with the nyāsa-mantra and then applied the same mantra upon the body of the child.

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs* hastily started the rituals of protection without first doing *ācamana* because of great fear. After calming down, they did the rituals properly by first performing *ācamana* (*saṁspṛṣṭa salilā*). They then performed *aṅga nyasa* and *kara nyasa* on their own bodies and hands. Then they invoked *bīja mantras* on Kṛṣṇa's limbs. The *bīja* consists of the first syllable of the name with an *anusvara*. Example: *am namaḥ*, "May Aja protect Your feet." *Mam namaḥ*, "May Maniman protect Your knees."

|| 10.6.22-23 ||

avyād ajo 'ṅghri maṇimāṁs tava jānv athorū

yajño 'cyutaḥ kaṭi-taṭaṁ jaṭharaṁ hayāsyaḥ

hṛt keśavas tvad-ura īśa inas tu kaṇṭhaṁ

viṣṇur bhujaṁ mukham urukrama īśvaraḥ kam

cakry agrataḥ saha-gado harir astu paścāt

tvat-pārśvayor dhanur-asī madhu-hājanaś ca

koṇeṣu śaṅkha urugāya upary upendras

tārkṣyaḥ kṣitau haladharaḥ puruṣaḥ samantāt

TRANSLATION

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī informed Mahārāja Parīkṣit that the gopīs, following the proper system, protected Kṛṣṇa, their child, with this mantra.] May Aja protect Your legs, may Maṇimān protect Your knees, Yajña Your thighs, Acyuta the upper part of Your waist, and Hayagrīva Your abdomen. May Keśava protect Your heart, Īśa Your chest, the sun-god Your neck, Viṣṇu Your arms, Urukrama Your face, and Īśvara Your head. May Cakrī protect You from the front; may Śrī Hari, Gadādharī, the carrier of the club, protect You from the back; and may the carrier of the bow, who is known as the enemy of Madhu, and Lord Ajana, the carrier of the sword, protect Your two sides. May Lord Urugāya, the carrier of the conchshell, protect You from all corners; may Upendra protect You from above; may Garuḍa protect You on the ground; and may Lord Haladhara, the Supreme Person, protect You on all sides.

COMMENTARY

They protected Kṛṣṇa's limbs using a *mantra*. *Aṅghri* stands for the two feet. Manimān is a particular *avatāra* of the Lord. *Jānu* stands for both knees. *Hrt* refers to the lotus holding the living entity in the region of the heart. *Uro* means chest.

In verse twenty-three, the directions around Kṛṣṇa are protected. "May the holder of the *cakra* protect You in front. May Sahagada, the holder of the club, protect You behind. May Madhusudana, holding the bow, and Aja, holding a sword protect, Your sides. May

Saṅkha Urugāya, holding the conch, protect You in the four corners (northeast, northwest, southeast, southwest). May Upendra protect You above and may Tārkṣya (Garuḍa) protect You below. May Haladhara protect You in all directions."

|| 10.6.24 ||

indriyāṇi hṛṣīkeśaḥ prāṇān nārāyaṇo 'vatu

śvetadvīpa-patiś cittaṁ mano yogeśvaro 'vatu

TRANSLATION

May Hṛṣīkeśa protect Your senses, and Nārāyaṇa Your life air. May the master of Śvetadvīpa protect the core of Your heart, and may Lord Yogeśvara protect Your mind.

|| 10.6.25-26 ||

pṛśnigarbhas tu te buddhim ātmānaṁ bhagavān paraḥ

krīḍantaṁ pātu govindaḥ śayānaṁ pātu mādhavaḥ

vrajantam avyād vaikuṇṭha āsīnaṁ tvāṁ śriyaḥ patiḥ

bhuñjānaṁ yajñabhuk pātu sarva-graha-bhayaṅkaraḥ

TRANSLATION

May Lord Pṛśnigarbha protect Your intelligence, and the Supreme Personality of Godhead Your soul. While You are playing, may Govinda protect You, and while You are sleeping may Mādhava protect You. May Lord Vaikuṇṭha protect You while You are walking, and may Lord Nārāyaṇa, the husband of the goddess of fortune, protect You while You are sitting. Similarly, may Lord Yajñabhuk, the fearful enemy of all evil planets, always protect You while You enjoy life.

|| 10.6.27-29 ||

ḍākinyo yātudhānyaś ca kuṣmāṇḍā ye 'rbhaka-grahāḥ

bhūta-preta-piśācāś ca yakṣa-rakṣo-vināyakāḥ

koṭarā revatī jyeṣṭhā pūtanā mātṛkādayaḥ

unmādā ye hy apasmārā deha-prāṇendriya-druhaḥ

svapna-dṛṣṭā mahotpātā vṛddhā bāla-grahāś ca ye

sarve naśyantu te viṣṇor nāma-grahaṇa-bhīravaḥ

TRANSLATION

The evil witches known as Ḍākinīs, Yātudhānīs and Kuṣmāṇḍas are the greatest enemies of children, and the evil spirits like Bhūtas, Pretas, Piśācas, Yakṣas, Rākṣasas and Vināyakas, as well as witches like Koṭarā, Revatī, Jyeṣṭhā, Pūtanā and Mātṛkā, are always ready to give trouble to the body, the life air and the senses, causing loss of memory, madness and bad dreams. Like the most experienced evil stars, they all create great disturbances, especially for children, but one can vanquish them simply by uttering Lord Viṣṇu's name, for when Lord Viṣṇu's name resounds, all of them become afraid and go away.

|| 10.6.30 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

iti praṇaya-baddhābhir gopībhiḥ kṛta-rakṣaṇam

pāyayitvā stanaṁ mātā sannyaveśayad ātmajam

TRANSLATION

Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: All the gopīs, headed by mother Yaśodā, were bound by maternal affection. After they thus chanted mantras to protect the child, mother Yaśodā gave the child the nipple of her breast to suck and then got Him to lie down on His bed.

COMMENTARY

Thus the *gopīs*, being bound by maternal affection, completed the rituals for protection. After offering her breast to Kṛṣṇa, and seeing Him happily sucking her milk, Yaśodā could understand that Kṛṣṇa was in good health. Then she lay Kṛṣṇa down to sleep.

|| 10.6.31 ||

tāvan nandādayo gopā mathurāyā vrajaṁ gatāḥ

vilokya pūtanā-dehaṁ babhūvur ativismitāḥ

TRANSLATION

Meanwhile, all the cowherd men, headed by Nanda Mahārāja, returned from Mathurā, and when they saw on the way the gigantic body of Pūtanā lying dead, they were struck with great wonder.

COMMENTARY

The cowherd men were astonished: “Perhaps a flying mountain fell from the sky by mistake and crushed all the huge trees. Perhaps we have come to the wrong place under the spell of some witch. Or perhaps this is just a magical illusion.” In this way many doubts arose in their minds.

|| 10.6.32 ||

nūnaṁ batarṣiḥ sañjāto yogeśo vā samāsa saḥ

sa eva dṛṣṭo hy utpāto yad āhānakadundubhiḥ

TRANSLATION

Nanda Mahārāja and the other gopas exclaimed: My dear friends, you must know that Ānakadundubhi, Vasudeva, has become a great saint or a master of mystic power. Otherwise how could he have foreseen this calamity and predicted it to us?

COMMENTARY

“Certainly (*nūnam*) Vasudeva is the ṛsi in our family; for being all knowing, he has predicted correctly. Through practice of *aṣṭāṅga yoga* (*yogesa*) Vasudeva has acquired the power to see the future. Thus his glories forever shine (*samāsa*).”

|| 10.6.33 ||

kalevaraṁ paraśubhiś chittvā tat te vrajaukasaḥ

dūre kṣiptvāvayavaśo nyadahan kāṣṭha-veṣṭitam

TRANSLATION

The inhabitants of Vraja cut the gigantic body of Pūtanā into pieces with the help of axes. Then they threw the pieces far away, covered them with wood and burned them to ashes.

COMMENTARY

On the order of Upananda and others, the lower class men (*vrajaukasa*) completely burned Pūtanā's body out of fear that it would come to life again. The influence of poisonous creatures is extinguished when their bodies are burned up.

|| 10.6.34 ||

dahyamānasya dehasya dhūmaś cāguru-saurabhaḥ

utthitaḥ kṛṣṇa-nirbhukta-sapady āhata-pāpmanaḥ

TRANSLATION

Because of Kṛṣṇa's having sucked the breast of the Rākṣasī Pūtanā, when Kṛṣṇa killed her she was immediately freed of all material contamination. Her sinful reactions automatically vanished, and therefore when her gigantic body was being burnt, the smoke emanating from her body was fragrant like aguru incense.

COMMENTARY

This verse describes how Pūtanā's body became sanctified by the touch of Kṛṣṇa's mouth. Her body became purified of all sins (*āhata pāpma*) the moment (*sapadi*) Kṛṣṇa began drinking from her breast (*kṛṣṇa nirbhukta*).

|| 10.6.35 ||

pūtanā loka-bāla-ghnī rākṣasī rudhirāśanā

jighāṁsayāpi haraye stanaṁ dattvāpa sad-gatim

TRANSLATION

Pūtanā was always hankering for the blood of human children, and with that desire she came to kill Kṛṣṇa; but because she offered her breast to the Lord, she attained the greatest achievement. What then is to be said of those who had

natural devotion and affection for Kṛṣṇa as mothers and who offered Him their breasts to suck or offered something very dear, as a mother offers something to a child?

COMMENTARY

"If a person offers service with an attempt to kill the Lord and attains the goal of life, how much more will a person attain who offers with a neutral attitude. How much more will a person attain who offers with faith? How much more will a person attain who offers with pure *bhakti*? If a person worships an *avatāra* of the Lord, he will attain the supreme destination. But how much more will a person attain who worships Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the source of all *avatāras* (*sarva-avatarī*)?"

|| 10.6.36 ||

kiṁ punaḥ śraddhayā bhaktyā kṛṣṇāya paramātmane

yacchan priyatamaṁ kiṁ nu raktās tan-mātaro yathā

TRANSLATION

"If one offers a poison breast to Kṛṣṇa and attains the supreme destination, how much more one will attain by offering a more poisonous object? If one offers a dear object certainly one will attain a higher destination. But if one offers a dearer object, then how much more he will attain. And if one offers the dear most object, he will certainly attain the highest destination.

COMMENTARY

If Pūtanā, a demoniac *rākṣasī*, could attain the highest destination, then what can be attained by a faithful human being? If one is devotee, how much more he will attain. And will not a pure devotee of the Lord (*rakta*) attain the highest award? Then what to speak of the elderly *gopīs* who had extreme affection for the Lord during the stealing of the calves by Lord Brahmā? Paying respects to mother Yaśodā from a distance, I have placed her in the highest position. Therefore, I will write no more because her love for Kṛṣṇa is beyond words.

|| 10.6.37-38 ||

padbhyāṁ bhakta-hṛdi-sthābhyāṁ vandyābhyāṁ loka-vanditaiḥ

aṅgaṁ yasyāḥ samākramya bhagavān api tat-stanam

yātudhāny api sā svargam avāpa jananī-gatim

kṛṣṇa-bhukta-stana-kṣīrāḥ kim u gāvo 'numātaraḥ

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, is always situated within the core of the heart of the pure devotee, and He is always offered prayers by such worshipable personalities as Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva. Because Kṛṣṇa embraced Pūtanā's body with great pleasure and sucked her breast, although she was a great witch, she attained the position of a mother in the transcendental world and thus achieved the highest perfection. What then is to be said of the cows whose nipples Kṛṣṇa sucked with great pleasure and who offered their milk very jubilantly with affection exactly like that of a mother?

COMMENTARY

These two verses describe the greatness of Pūtanā's attainment through the mercy of the Lord. Even though Pūtanā was *rakṣaṣī*, her body was tread upon by Kṛṣṇa's feet which are situated in the hearts of the devotees and worshiped by those worthy of worship (*devatas*). Pūtanā's breast milk was drunk by Kṛṣṇa, and she attained the supreme abode as a mother of the Lord.

bhakta hrdi sthabhyam: Kṛṣṇa's feet are situated only in the hearts of the devotees. But Pūtanā was neither a devotee nor a non-devotee. She was an enemy of Kṛṣṇa. *vandabhyam loka vanditaih:* Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet are worshiped by worshipable personalities such as Brahmā and Śiva. But Pūtanā did not worship Kṛṣṇa's feet, rather she did the opposite. At time of her death, Pūtanā tried to dislodge Kṛṣṇa's feet from her chest. Unable to do so, she began to beat them with all her strength.

samakramya: completely; Kṛṣṇa stepped on Pūtanā forcefully with His feet, not just touching her.

svargam: heavenly planets; Where did Pūtanā go at the time of her death? She attained Vaikuṇṭha. This is explained in *Bhagavatam* (11.7.1), "Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva and all other planetary rulers are praying to live in *Vaikuṇṭha*." Lord Brahmā says in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.14.35), "Pūtanā attained You along with her family members." According to these two verses, the word *svarga* must mean *svaḥ-vāsam*, Your personal abode or *Vaikuṇṭha*. The word does not refer to the material heavenly planet called *Svarga*.

jananī-gatim: destiny of a mother; Which Vaikuṇṭha planet did Pūtanā attain? The verse explains that Pūtanā attained the same planet as mother Yaśodā, *jananī-gatim*. Therefore, Pūtanā attained Goloka, but her position was predominated by happiness and reverence. She did not attain the place predominated by service in prema. One cannot say that she attained the status of a mother. Verse 10.6.36 says that place is reserved for those who are *anurāgi* (*raktas*), with pure loving attachment for Kṛṣṇa. Here verse thirty-eight says that the cows and motherly *gopīs* who fed milk to Kṛṣṇa during the *Brahma vimohana līlā* attained a higher destination than Pūtanā.

How could Pūtanā, whose enmity was equal to Kaṁsa's, though she imitated the dress and emotion of a gopī, attain the same status as Yaśodā? Therefore *Uddhava* says in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (3.2.23): *lebhe gatiṁ dhātry-ucitāṁ*, "Pūtanā attained a status like a nurse." Thus in the present verse some interpret the word *jananī* (mother) to be *dhātrī* (nurse). But even then one should not say that Pūtanā was a direct nurse of Kṛṣṇa. Rather she attained a form like a nurse in a Goloka filled with *sukhaiśvarya*, reverential happiness.

|| 10.6.39-40 ||

payāṁsi yāsām apibat putra-sneha-snutāny alam

bhagavān devakī-putraḥ kaivalyādy-akhila-pradaḥ

tāsām aviratam kṛṣṇe kurvatīnāṁ sutekṣaṇam

na punaḥ kalpate rājan saṁsāro 'jñāna-sambhavaḥ

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, is the bestower of many benedictions, including liberation [kaivalya], or oneness with the Brahman effulgence. For that Personality of Godhead, the gopīs always felt maternal love, and Kṛṣṇa sucked their breasts with full satisfaction. Therefore, because of their relationship as mother and son, although the gopīs were engaged in various family activities, one should never think that they returned to this material world after leaving their bodies.

COMMENTARY

By saying that the elderly *gopīs* attained more than Pūtanā in going to Vaikuṇṭha, there is a contradiction to the statement that enmity and affection lead to the same goal. That

statement taken literally would lead to criticism of the Lord for lack of discrimination. If it is true that the elderly *gopīs* attained more than Pūtanā who attained Vaikuṇṭha, then what did they attain? That should be explained. With this in mind the present verse is spoken.

"Though Kṛṣṇa is the bestower of all sorts of goals such as liberation, He drank Pūtanā's breast milk with extremely rare awareness (*alam*). Lord Brahmā says in the *Bhāgavatam* 10.14.31: "Fortunate are the cows and *gopīs* whose sweet breast milk Kṛṣṇa drank in great bliss." With this rare awareness Kṛṣṇa thinks, "Whatever they want I will give, and as well, whatever I want, they are willing to give." Since whatever is desired is easily attained, Kṛṣṇa certainly will give to the cows and *gopīs* a suitable reward. Higher than Vaikuṇṭha or even Goloka, Kṛṣṇa will grant them Bhauma Vṛndāvana which is the most attractive of all. Though Kṛṣṇa appeared from Devakī's womb, He did not drink her milk. But He regularly drank the milk of the *gopīs*.

Devakī putra: son of Devakī; Thus by mentioning Kṛṣṇa as Devakī *putra* in this verse it is implied that the gopīs were more attractive to Him. *samsāro:* birth death cycle; One should not think that Kṛṣṇa liberated the *gopīs* from *saṁśara*, for already they had no material bondage. There is no bondage for those engaged in the Lord's service. The *saṁśara* ensnares those attached to house, husband and sons. Kṛṣṇa drank milk from the *gopīs'* breasts and played in their houses. Kṛṣṇa's father was their husband and Kṛṣṇa was their son. This attachment did not breed *saṁśara*. That is the intent of verse forty.

suteksana means the elderly *gopīs* looked on Kṛṣṇa as their son. For them *saṁsāra* did not occur (*na punah kalpate*). *Saṁsāra* is born of ignorance. A *jñāni's* knowledge of Brahman puts an end to *saṁsāra*. However better than that is the *sānta bhakta's* realization of Bhagavān as Brahman. Better yet is the *dāsya bhakta* who realizes Lord Kṛṣṇa as his master. By that the Lord becomes controlled. Superior to that is the *sākhya bhakta* who treats the Lord like a friend. Higher than that is the *vātsalya bhakta* who realizes the Lord as a son (mentioned in this verse). Here there is a gradation of release from *saṁsāra* according to the degree of surrender of the Lord to the devotee.

|| 10.6.41 ||

kaṭa-dhūmasya saurabhyam avaghrāya vrajaukasaḥ

kim idaṁ kuta eveti vadanto vrajam āyayuḥ

TRANSLATION

Upon smelling the fragrance of the smoke emanating from Pūtanā's burning body, many inhabitants of Vrajabhūmi in distant places were astonished. "Where is this fragrance coming from?" they asked. Thus they went to the spot where Pūtanā's body was being burnt.

COMMENTARY

After settling the philosophical issues, Śukadeva returns to the topic at hand.

kata: burning the dead body; *kutah kim idam:* "Where does this smell come from? Is this aguru incense coming down from Indrapuri through the earth and trying to enter Sutala? Or is it ascending from Bali's abode on Sutala through the earth and up to Svarga? Or is it coming from Kuvera's city in the north or from Varuṇa's city in the west?" In this way, the cowherd men entertained many questions.

|| 10.6.42 ||

te tatra varṇitaṁ gopaiḥ pūtanāgamanādikam

śrutvā tan-nidhanaṁ svasti śiśoś cāsan suvismitāḥ

TRANSLATION

When the inhabitants of Vraja who had come from distant places heard the whole story of how Pūtanā had come and then been killed by Kṛṣṇa, they were certainly astonished, and they offered their blessings to the child for His wonderful deed of killing Pūtanā. Nanda Mahārāja, of course, was very much obliged to Vasudeva, who had foreseen the incident, and simply thanked him, thinking how wonderful Vasudeva was.

COMMENTARY

The returning cowherd men were very astonished. "Vasudeva has spoken correctly." In discussing amongst themselves they said, "Who else but Nārāyaṇa could protect the baby?"

|| 10.6.43 ||

nandaḥ sva-putram ādāya pretyāgatam udāra-dhīḥ

mūrdhny upāghrāya paramāṁ mudaṁ lebhe kurūdvaha

TRANSLATION

O Mahārāja Parīkṣit, best of the Kurus, Nanda Mahārāja was very liberal and simple. He immediately took his son Kṛṣṇa on his lap as if Kṛṣṇa had returned from death, and by formally smelling his son's head, Nanda Mahārāja undoubtedly enjoyed transcendental bliss.

COMMENTARY

Returning from his visit (*pretyagataha*) to Mathurā, Nanda began to lament: "So much misfortune has occurred in my absence. Why did I go to Mathurā?"

udāra dhi: indicates that Nanda began to criticize everyone's intelligence: "How could the dull doorkeepers not prevent anyone from entering the house?"

|| 10.6.44 ||

ya etat pūtanā-mokṣaṁ kṛṣṇasyārbhakam adbhutam

śṛṇuyāc chraddhayā martyo govinde labhate ratim

TRANSLATION

Any person who hears with faith and devotion about how Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, killed Pūtanā, and who thus invests his hearing in such childhood pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, certainly attains attachment for Govinda, the supreme, original person.

COMMENTARY

Anyone who faithfully hears the childhood pastimes of Kṛṣṇa (*Kṛṣṇasya arbakam*) and the liberation of Pūtanā, and accepts them as most astonishing, will obtain attraction for Govinda. An alternate reading for *śṛṇuyāc* (hears) is *nisamya* (hearing). Taking that reading, the meaning becomes, "Anyone who hears the childhood pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and the liberation of Pūtanā with faith will attain attraction to Govinda and everything related to Govinda."

Thus ends the commentary on the Sixth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Seven

The Killing of the Demon Tṛṇāvarta

|| 10.7.1-2 ||

śrī-rājovāca

yena yenāvatāreṇa bhagavān harir īśvaraḥ

karoti karṇa-ramyāṇi mano-jñāni ca naḥ prabho

yac-chṛṇvato ’paity aratir vitṛṣṇā sattvaṁ ca śuddhyaty acireṇa puṁsaḥ

bhaktir harau tat-puruṣe ca sakhyaṁ tad eva hāraṁ vada manyase cet

TRANSLATION

King Parīkṣit said: My lord, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, all the various activities exhibited by the incarnations of the Supreme Personality of Godhead are certainly pleasing to the ear and to the mind. Simply by one’s hearing of these activities, the dirty things in one’s mind immediately vanish. Generally we are reluctant to hear about the activities of the Lord, but Kṛṣṇa’s childhood activities are so attractive that they are automatically pleasing to the mind and ear. Thus one’s attachment for hearing about material things, which is the root cause of material existence, vanishes, and one gradually develops devotional service to the Supreme Lord, attachment for Him, and friendship with devotees who give us the contribution of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. If you think it fit, kindly speak about those activities of the Lord.

COMMENTARY

The seventh chapter shows the *aiśvarya* (power and majesty) aspect of Kṛṣṇa's childhood pastimes. Kṛṣṇa broke the cart after taking His bath and going to sleep. He killed Tṛṇāvarta and showed the whole universe to mother Yaśodā. By sucking Pūtanā's breast, Kṛṣṇa showed the power of His lips. In the pastime of demolishing the cart, Kṛṣṇa showed the power of His feet, and by killing Tṛṇāvarta, Kṛṣṇa showed the power of His hands. He showed His unlimited powers by revealing the universe twice (in this and the next chapter) to his mother.

"My mind is attracted to the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa's other *avatāras*, but I am especially greedy to hear Kṛṣṇa's childhood pastimes."

With this intent, Parīkṣit speaks this verse. "Hearing the pastimes of the different avatāras of the Lord fills me with bliss. But, if you agree then please speak about those pastimes which will destroy one's apathy and lack of taste for hearing them. Hearing Kṛṣṇa's transcendental pastimes creates a hankering to hear more, and it purifies the mind of filthy desires. At first rock candy tastes bitter to a man suffering from jaundice, but eventually one regains the power to taste its sweetness. Similarly, a conditioned soul has no attraction to hearing *hari-katha*, but continual hearing will quickly produce attachment (*āśakti*), *rati* (*bhāva*) and finally *prema*. In the beginning, one will develop friendship with Kṛṣṇa's devotees, and at the stage of *prema* one will feel love for all living beings."

Hearing anything about Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa gradually rids one of indifference to hearing about the Lord and helps one attain *prema*. But hearing the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa's childhood quickly brings about *Kṛṣṇa-prema*.

|| 10.7.3 ||

athānyad api kṛṣṇasya tokācaritam adbhutam

mānuṣaṁ lokam āsādya taj-jātim anurundhataḥ

TRANSLATION

Please describe other pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality, who appeared on this planet earth, imitating a human child and performing wonderful activities like killing Pūtanā.

COMMENTARY

In his enthusiasm, Parīkṣit repeats his request to clarify his intention. Being requested by mankind, the Lord appeared on earth (rather than being requested by demigods and appearing on Svarga). In this way Śrī Kṛṣṇa especially blessed the humans on earth.

|| 10.7.4 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

kadācid autthānika-kautukāplave janmarkṣa-yoge samaveta-yoṣitām

vāditra-gīta-dvija-mantra-vācakaiś cakāra sūnor abhiṣecanaṁ satī

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: When mother Yaśodā's baby was slanting His body to attempt to rise and turn around, this attempt was observed by a Vedic ceremony. In such a ceremony, called utthāna, which is performed when a child is due to leave the house for the first time, the child is properly bathed. Just after Kṛṣṇa turned three months old, mother Yaśodā celebrated this ceremony with other women of the neighborhood. On that day, there was a conjunction of the moon with the constellation Rohiṇī. As the brāhmaṇas joined by chanting Vedic hymns and professional musicians also took part, this great ceremony was observed by mother Yaśodā.

COMMENTARY

kadācit: some time; means this incident took place within three months of the child's birth. In the *Bhāgavatam* (2.7.27) it is mentioned that the breaking of the cart occurred when Kṛṣṇa was three months old: *trai-māsikasya ca padā sakaṭo 'pavṛttaḥ*. The village ladies swelled with joy when baby Kṛṣṇa first rolled over (*autthānik*). When the moon entered Kṛṣṇa's birth star (Rohiṇī), Yaśodā and her circle of gopī friends celebrated the event by bathing the child to the accompaniment of music, singing and chanting by the *brāhmaṇas*.

|| 10.7.5 ||

nandasya patnī kṛta-majjanādikaṁ vipraiḥ kṛta-svastyayanaṁ supūjitaiḥ

annādya-vāsaḥ-srag-abhīṣṭa-dhenubhiḥ sañjāta-nidrākṣam aśīśayac chanaiḥ

TRANSLATION

After completing the bathing ceremony for the child, mother Yaśodā received the brāhmaṇas by worshiping them with proper respect and giving them ample food grains and other eatables, clothing, desirable cows, and garlands. The brāhmaṇas properly chanted Vedic hymns to observe the auspicious ceremony, and when they finished and mother Yaśodā saw that the child felt sleepy, she lay down on the bed with the child until He was peacefully asleep.

COMMENTARY

After being honored (*supūjitaiḥ*) by gifts of rice, cloth and money the brāhmaṇas performed the auspicious birth rites. Because Kṛṣṇa had sleepy eyes (*saṁjāta-nidrākṣam*), He was put to rest (*aśīsayac*). For fear that Kṛṣṇa might wake up, Yaśodā held Him in her lap without moving. Then she lay down with her beloved son on a cot under a cart situated in a spacious courtyard. Upon understanding that Kṛṣṇa was fast asleep, Yaśodā got up very slowly and carefully.

|| 10.7.6 ||

autthānikautsukya-manā manasvinī samāgatān pūjayatī vrajaukasaḥ

naivāśṛṇod vai ruditaṁ sutasya sā rudan stanārthī caraṇāv udakṣipat

TRANSLATION

The liberal mother Yaśodā, absorbed in celebrating the utthāna ceremony, was busy receiving guests, worshiping them with all respect and offering them clothing, cows, garlands and grains. Thus she could not hear the child crying for His mother. At that time, the child Kṛṣṇa, demanding to drink the milk of His mother's breast, angrily threw His legs upward.

COMMENTARY

Because Yaśodā was busy exchanging pleasantries and giving ornaments, garlands, *candana*, oil and *sindhūra* to the village ladies who had assembled for the festival, she did not hear Kṛṣṇa crying from hunger (*stanārthī*) upon His waking. In anger, Kṛṣṇa kicked His legs upward while thinking, "Since you cannot hear My crying, maybe the sound of the cart breaking will catch your attention."

|| 10.7.7 ||

adhaḥ-śayānasya śiśor ano 'lpaka- pravāla-mṛdv-aṅghri-hataṁ vyavartata

vidhvasta-nānā-rāsa-kupya-bhājanaṁ vyatyasta-cakrākṣa-vibhinna-kūbaram

TRANSLATION

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa was lying down underneath the handcart in one corner of the courtyard, and although His little legs were as soft as leaves, when He struck the cart with His legs, it turned over violently and collapsed. The wheels separated from the axle, the hubs and spokes fell apart, and the pole of the handcart broke. On the cart there were many little utensils made of various metals, and all of them scattered hither and thither.

COMMENTARY

The cart was struck by the soft lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa as if with very little force. To break the cart Kṛṣṇa did not extend His foot high upward like Vāmana in breaking the shell of the universe, nor did Kṛṣṇa's feet become hard like Narasimha's nails to tear apart the hard body of Hiraṇyakaśipu. This rare display of power by Kṛṣṇa, which does not contradict the sweetness of His childhood pastimes, shows the completeness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana.

The cart turned upside down and the utensils of gold and silver scattered everywhere. The wheels and axle fell apart and the steering pole broke. The *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa* states that because a heavy demon entered the cart, the wheels sank in the earth and the cart's height decreased. Thus Kṛṣṇa's short baby legs could touch the cart.

|| 10.7.8 ||

dṛṣṭvā yaśodā-pramukhā vraja-striya autthānike karmaṇi yāḥ samāgatāḥ

nandādayaś cādbhuta-darśanākulāḥ kathaṁ svayaṁ vai śakaṭaṁ viparyagāt

TRANSLATION

When mother Yaśodā and the other ladies who had assembled for the utthāna festival, and all the men, headed by Nanda Mahārāja, saw the wonderful situation, they began to wonder how the handcart had collapsed by itself. They began to wander here and there, trying to find the cause, but were unable to do so.

COMMENTARY

Nanda, Yaśodā and the other assembled women and guests became dismayed upon seeing that astonishing event. They asked, “How could the cart fall apart on its own?”

|| 10.7.9 ||

ūcur avyavasita-matīn gopān gopīś ca bālakāḥ

rudatānena pādena kṣiptam etan na saṁśayaḥ

TRANSLATION

The assembled cowherd men and ladies began to contemplate how this thing had happened. “Is it the work of some demon or evil planet?” they asked. At that time, the small children present asserted that the cart had been kicked apart by the baby Kṛṣṇa. As soon as the crying baby bad kicked the cart’s wheel, the cart had collapsed. There was no doubt about it.

COMMENTARY

The children who had witnessed the event described it to the *gopīs*, who could not discern what had happened. The *gopīs* asked, “Is this the work of some demon or evil planets?”

|| 10.7.10 ||

na te śraddadhire gopā bāla-bhāṣitam ity uta

aprameyaṁ balaṁ tasya bālakasya na te viduḥ

TRANSLATION

The assembled gopīs and gopas, unaware that Kṛṣṇa is always unlimited, could not believe that baby Kṛṣṇa had such inconceivable power. They could not believe the statements of the children, and therefore they neglected these statements as being childish talk.

COMMENTARY

The cowherd men did not believe the statements of the children.

|| 10.7.11 ||

rudantaṁ sutam ādāya yaśodā graha-śaṅkitā

kṛta-svastyayanaṁ vipraiḥ sūktaiḥ stanam apāyayat

TRANSLATION

Thinking that some bad planet had attacked Kṛṣṇa, mother Yaśodā picked up the crying child and allowed Him to suck her breast. Then she called for experienced brāhmaṇas to chant Vedic hymns and perform an auspicious ritualistic ceremony.

COMMENTARY

Yaśodā had the *brāhmaṇas* perform *svastyayana*, chanting *mantras* to ward off the demons.

|| 10.7.12 ||

pūrvavat sthāpitaṁ gopair balibhiḥ sa-paricchadam

viprā hutvārcayāṁ cakrur dadhy-akṣata-kuśāmbubhiḥ

TRANSLATION

After the strong, stout cowherd men assembled the pots and paraphernalia on the handcart and set it up as before, the brāhmaṇas performed a ritualistic ceremony with a fire sacrifice to appease the bad planet, and then, with rice grains, kuśa, water and curd, they worshiped the Supreme Lord.

COMMENTARY

The cart was repaired and placed in its original position by some strong cowherd men. This proves that the cart was very large. The cowherd men worshiped the cart because the cart was one of their main possessions, being the abode of Lakṣmī, and the storehouse of their accumulated wealth.

|| 10.7.13-15 ||

ye 'sūyānṛta-dambherṣā-hiṁsā-māna-vivarjitāḥ

na teṣāṁ satya-śīlānām āśiṣo viphalāḥ kṛtāḥ

iti bālakam ādāya sāmarg-yajur-upākṛtaiḥ

jalaiḥ pavitrauṣadhibhir abhiṣicya dvijottamaiḥ

vācayitvā svastyayanaṁ nanda-gopaḥ samāhitaḥ

hutvā cāgniṁ dvijātibhyaḥ prādād annaṁ mahā-guṇam

TRANSLATION

When brāhmaṇas are free from envy, untruthfulness, unnecessary pride, grudges, disturbance by the opulence of others, and false prestige, their blessings never go in vain. Considering this, Nanda Mahārāja soberly took Kṛṣṇa on his lap and invited such truthful brāhmaṇas to perform a ritualistic ceremony according to the holy hymns of the Sāma Veda, Ṛg Veda and Yajur Veda. Then, while the hymns were being chanted, he bathed the child with water mixed with pure herbs, and after performing a fire ceremony, he sumptuously fed all the brāhmaṇas with first-class grains and other food.

COMMENTARY

Knowing that the blessings of *brāhmaṇas* were good for his child's welfare, Nanda spoke this verse. *Māna* means pride. The blessings of qualified *brāhmaṇas* must bear fruit. Kṛṣṇa was sprinkled with water mixed with *sarvauṣadhi* and *mahauṣadhi*, and purified by *mantras* from the *Sāma, Rg* and *Yajur Veda*. Nanda Mahārāja performed a sacrifice, and then fed the *brāhmaṇas* with tasty aromatic food (*mahā-guṇam*).

|| 10.7.16 ||

gāvaḥ sarva-guṇopetā vāsaḥ-srag-rukma-mālinīḥ

ātmajābhyudayārthāya prādāt te cānvayuñjata

TRANSLATION

Nanda Mahārāja, for the sake of the affluence of his own son Kṛṣṇa, gave the brāhmaṇas cows fully decorated with garments, flower garlands and gold necklaces. These cows, fully qualified to give ample milk, were given to the brāhmaṇas in charity, and the brāhmaṇas accepted them and bestowed blessings upon the whole family, and especially upon Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

Nanda Mahārāja gave cows endowed with all qualities (*sarva-guṇopetā*), which means they gave abundant milk. Then (*anu*) the brāhmaṇas accepted (*ayuñjata*) the cows. .

|| 10.7.17 ||

viprā mantra-vido yuktās tair yāḥ proktās tathāśiṣaḥ

tā niṣphalā bhaviṣyanti na kadācid api sphuṭam

TRANSLATION

The brāhmaṇas, who were completely expert in chanting the Vedic hymns, were all yogīs fully equipped with mystic powers. Whatever blessings they spoke were certainly never fruitless.

COMMENTARY

The brāhmaṇas are described here as *yukta*, which means they were great *yogīs* (*yoginaḥ*), and thus whatever blessings they gave would come true.

|| 10.7.18 ||

ekadāroham ārūḍhaṁ lālayantī sutaṁ satī

garimāṇaṁ śiśor voḍhuṁ na sehe giri-kūṭavat

TRANSLATION

One day, a year after Kṛṣṇa's appearance, mother Yaśodā was patting her son on her lap. But suddenly she felt the child to be heavier than a mountain peak, and she could no longer bear His weight.

COMMENTARY

"What use are all these things for Me, the Lord of all wealth?" This event took place when Kṛṣṇa was one year old. The *Bhāgavatam* (10.26.6) says: *eka-hāyana āsīno hriyamāṇo vihāyasā daityena yas tṛṇāvartam*, "The demon Tṛṇāvarta took away Kṛṣṇa when the Lord was one year old." Yaśodā felt great bliss by placing Kṛṣṇa on her lap and lifting Him up in the air with her two hands. Suddenly Kṛṣṇa became as heavy as a

mountain top, and Yaśodā could no longer hold Him. Kṛṣṇa knew that Tṛṇāvarta wanted to kidnap Yaśodā along with Himself. Therefore, Kṛṣṇa displayed His *aiśvarya śakti* in order to prevent any pain coming to Yaśodā. Becoming heavier than the heaviest, Kṛṣṇa forced Yaśodā to place Him on the ground. "Yaśodā can only lift Me a little, but I want to play in the sky." Desiring like this, Kṛṣṇa let the asura take Him away.

|| 10.7.19 ||

bhūmau nidhāya taṁ gopī vismitā bhāra-pīḍitā

mahā-puruṣam ādadhyau jagatām āsa karmasu

TRANSLATION

Feeling the child to be as heavy as the entire universe and therefore being anxious, thinking that perhaps the child was being attacked by some other ghost or demon, the astonished mother Yaśodā put the child down on the ground and began to think of Nārāyaṇa. Foreseeing disturbances, she called for the brāhmaṇas to counteract this heaviness, and then she engaged in her other household affairs. She had no alternative than to remember the lotus feet of Nārāyaṇa, for she could not understand that Kṛṣṇa was the original source of everything.

COMMENTARY

Being disturbed, Yaśodā put Kṛṣṇa on the ground as she wondered how her son had suddenly become so heavy. "Maybe some demon has done this?" Fearing this, Yaśodā took shelter of Nārāyaṇa, the Lord of the universe. Yaśodā glanced upward to Vaikuṇṭha and in meditation said, "O Lord, You have given this son, so now You must protect Him." Then in great anxiety, Yaśodā went out to call some *brāhmaṇas* to perform the *svastyayana karma* (ceremonies for good fortune).

|| 10.7.20 ||

daityo nāmnā tṛṇāvartaḥ kaṁsa-bhṛtyaḥ praṇoditaḥ

cakravāta-svarūpeṇa jahārāsīnam arbhakam

TRANSLATION

While the child was sitting on the ground, a demon named Tṛṇāvarta, who was a servant of Kaṁsa's, came there as a whirlwind, at Kaṁsa's instigation, and very easily carried the child away into the air.

COMMENTARY

Just at that time, Tṛṇāvarta came and stole the child. By the influence of His *aiśvarya śakti* Kṛṣṇa became so light that Tṛṇāvarta could lift Him.

|| 10.7.21 ||

gokulaṁ sarvam āvṛṇvan muṣṇaṁś cakṣūṁṣi reṇubhiḥ

īrayan sumahā-ghora-śabdena pradiśo diśaḥ

TRANSLATION

Covering the whole land of Gokula with particles of dust, that demon, acting as a strong whirlwind, covered everyone's vision and began vibrating everywhere with a greatly fearful sound.

COMMENTARY

A tumultuous sound reverberated (*īrayan*) in all directions.

|| 10.7.22 ||

muhūrtam abhavad goṣṭhaṁ rajasā tamasāvṛtam

sutaṁ yaśodā nāpaśyat tasmin nyastavatī yataḥ

TRANSLATION

For a moment, the whole pasturing ground was overcast with dense darkness from the dust storm, and mother Yaśodā was unable to find her son where she had placed Him.

COMMENTARY

Yaśodā did not see baby Kṛṣṇa there (*tasmin*), where (*yataḥ*) she had left Him (*nyastavatī*).

|| 10.7.23 ||

nāpaśyat kaścanātmānaṁ paraṁ cāpi vimohitaḥ

tṛṇāvarta-nisṛṣṭābhiḥ śarkarābhir upadrutaḥ

TRANSLATION

Because of the bits of sand thrown about by Tṛṇāvarta, people could not see themselves or anyone else, and thus they were illusioned and disturbed.

|| 10.7.24 ||

iti khara-pavana-cakra-pāṁśu-varṣe suta-padavīm abalāvilakṣya mātā

atikaruṇam anusmaranty aśocad bhuvi patitā mṛta-vatsakā yathā gauḥ

TRANSLATION

Because of the dust storm stirred up by the strong whirlwind, mother Yaśodā could find no trace of her son, nor could she understand why. Thus she fell down on the ground like a cow who has lost her calf and began to lament very pitifully.

COMMENTARY

Yaśodā could not see her child (*āvilakṣya*) because of the thick layers of dust showering down from the whirlwind demon.

|| 10.7.25 ||

ruditam anuniśamya tatra gopyo bhṛśam anutapta-dhiyo ’śru-pūrṇa-mukhyaḥ

rurudur anupalabhya nanda-sūnuṁ pavana upārata-pāṁśu-varṣa-vege

TRANSLATION

When the force of the dust storm and the winds subsided, Yaśodā’s friends, the other gopīs, approached mother Yaśodā, hearing her pitiful crying. Not seeing Kṛṣṇa present, they too felt very much aggrieved and joined mother Yaśodā in crying, their eyes full of tears.

COMMENTARY

After the gusts of wind blew away the dust, the *gopīs* heard crying from Yaśodā's house. They also began crying as they converged on Yaśodā's house from all directions.

|| 10.7.26 ||

tṛṇāvartaḥ śānta-rayo vātyā-rūpa-dharo haran

kṛṣṇaṁ nabho-gato gantuṁ nāśaknod bhūri-bhāra-bhṛt

TRANSLATION

Having assumed the form of a forceful whirlwind, the demon Tṛṇāvarta took Kṛṣṇa very high in the sky, but when Kṛṣṇa became heavier than the demon, the demon had to stop his force and could go no further.

COMMENTARY

At first Kṛṣṇa was as light as a normal child, and Tṛṇāvarta lifted Him high in the sky. When Kṛṣṇa became heavy, however, Tṛṇāvarta slowed down. Within seconds, Tṛṇāvarta could not carry Kṛṣṇa any further so he stopped moving.

|| 10.7.27 ||

tam aśmānaṁ manyamāna ātmano guru-mattayā

gale gṛhīta utsraṣṭuṁ nāśaknod adbhutārbhakam

TRANSLATION

Because of Kṛṣṇa's weight, Tṛṇāvarta considered Him to be like a great mountain or a hunk of iron. But because Kṛṣṇa had caught the demon's neck, the demon was unable to throw Him off. He therefore thought of the child as wonderful, since he could neither bear the child nor cast aside the burden.

COMMENTARY

After fulfilling His desire to fly in sky, and the desire of the celestial ladies of Svarga to see His incomparable beauty, Kṛṣṇa prepared to kill Tṛṇāvarta. Kṛṣṇa became so heavy that the demon felt he was carrying a mountain made of iron. Because Kṛṣṇa was holding him by the neck, Tṛṇāvarta could not throw off the Lord. Playing the part of a small child, Kṛṣṇa feigned fear of falling from that height and therefore clung to Tṛṇāvarta's neck.

|| 10.7.28 ||

gala-grahaṇa-niśceṣṭo daityo nirgata-locanaḥ

avyakta-rāvo nyapatat saha-bālo vyasur vraje

TRANSLATION

With Kṛṣṇa grasping him by the throat, Tṛṇāvarta choked, unable to make even a sound or even to move his hands and legs. His eyes popping out, the demon lost his life and fell, along with the little boy, down to the ground of Vraja.

|| 10.7.29 ||

tam antarikṣāt patitaṁ śilāyāṁ viśīrṇa-sarvāvayavaṁ karālam

puraṁ yathā rudra-śareṇa viddhaṁ striyo rudatyo dadṛśuḥ sametāḥ

TRANSLATION

While the gopīs who had gathered were crying for Kṛṣṇa, the demon fell from the sky onto a big slab of stone, his limbs dislocated, as if he had been pierced by the arrow of Lord Śiva like Tripurāsura.

|| 10.7.30 ||

prādāya mātre pratihṛtya vismitāḥ kṛṣṇaṁ ca tasyorasi lambamānam

taṁ svastimantaṁ puruṣāda-nītaṁ vihāyasā mṛtyu-mukhāt pramuktam

gopyaś ca gopāḥ kila nanda-mukhyā labdhvā punaḥ prāpur atīva modam

TRANSLATION

The gopīs immediately picked Kṛṣṇa up from the chest of the demon and delivered Him, free from all inauspiciousness, to mother Yaśodā. Because the child, although taken into the sky by the demon, was unhurt and now free from all danger and misfortune, the gopīs and cowherd men, headed by Nanda Mahārāja, were extremely happy.

COMMENTARY

The *gopas* and *gopīs* picked up Kṛṣṇa, who was clinging to (*lambamānam*) the chest of the demon, and gave Him to Yaśodā. They were astonished to see how the demon had fallen on his back on a stone slab and that Kṛṣṇa was unharmed playing on his chest. Though Kṛṣṇa was taken by the demon (*puruṣāda*, eater of humans) high into the sky (*vihāyasā*), He was miraculously saved from the mouth of death.

|| 10.7.31 ||

aho batāty-adbhutam eṣa rakṣasā bālo nivṛttiṁ gamito 'bhyagāt punaḥ

hiṁsraḥ sva-pāpena vihiṁsitaḥ khalaḥ sādhuḥ samatvena bhayād vimucyate

TRANSLATION

It is most astonishing that although this innocent child was taken away by the Rākṣasa to be eaten, He has returned without having been killed or even injured. Because this demon was envious, cruel and sinful, he has been killed for his own sinful activities. This is the law of nature. An innocent devotee is always protected by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and a sinful person is always vanquished for his sinful life.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa was only a small, delicate child, yet He clearly manifested enormous power to kill such a great demon. This however, did not decrease the affection of Nanda Mahārāja and others; rather it increased it. This idea is expressed in three verses.

āty-adbhutam eṣa: Kṛṣṇa's feat was the most astonishing of all possible astonishing things. This was so because baby Kṛṣṇa almost became annihilated (*nivṛttiṁ*). The word *marana*, which means death, is not used because of its inauspicious connotations. Though Kṛṣṇa neared death, He again returned ('*bhyagāt*) to His friends.

One of Kṛṣṇa's friends remarked, "But what is so astonishing? The cruel demon was destroyed because of his sin (*sva papena*) of stealing an innocent child. Though Kṛṣṇa is

only a child. He is saintly because He regards enemies and friends equally (*samatvena*), and thus He was saved from danger.”

|| 10.7.32 ||

kiṁ nas tapaś cīrṇam adhokṣajārcanaṁ pūrteṣṭa-dattam uta bhūta-sauhṛdam

yat samparetaḥ punar eva bālako diṣṭyā sva-bandhūn praṇayann upasthitaḥ

TRANSLATION

Nanda Mahārāja and the others said: We must previously have performed austerities for a very long time, worshiped the Supreme Personality of Godhead, performed pious activities for public life, constructing public roads and wells, and also given charity, as a result of which this boy, although faced with death, has returned to give happiness to His relatives.

COMMENTARY

Nanda Mahārāja and others began to speak: “If anything inauspicious had happened to Kṛṣṇa, we all would have died. That Kṛṣṇa is unharmed is a result of heaps of pious activities.” Thus they spoke this verse. How much austerities they must have done (*cīrṇam*); how much worship of the Lord; how much help to other living entities; how many auspicious works such as sacrifices (*iṣṭam*) and constructing a well or canal (*pūrta*)? Because of these good deeds Kṛṣṇa has returned from death to bring life (*praṇayan*) to His friends by showing His affection.

|| 10.7.33 ||

dṛṣṭvādbhutāni bahuśo nanda-gopo bṛhadvane

vasudeva-vaco bhūyo mānayām āsa vismitaḥ

TRANSLATION

Having seen all these incidents in Bṛhadvana, Nanda Mahārāja became more and more astonished, and he remembered the words spoken to him by Vasudeva in Mathurā.

|| 10.7.34 ||

ekadārbhakam ādāya svāṅkam āropya bhāminī

prasnutaṁ pāyayām āsa stanaṁ sneha-pariplutā

TRANSLATION

One day mother Yaśodā, having picked up Kṛṣṇa and placing Him on her lap, was feeding Him milk from her breast with maternal affection. The milk was flowing from her breast, and the child was drinking it.

|| 10.7.35-36 ||

pīta-prāyasya jananī sutasya rucira-smitam

mukhaṁ lālayatī rājañ jṛmbhato dadṛśe idam

khaṁ rodasī jyotir-anīkam āśāḥ sūryendu-vahni-śvasanāmbudhīṁś ca

dvīpān nagāṁs tad-duhitṝr vanāni bhūtāni yāni sthira-jaṅgamāni

TRANSLATION

O King Parīkṣit, when the child Kṛṣṇa was almost finished drinking His mother's milk and mother Yaśodā was touching Him and looking at His beautiful, brilliantly smiling face, the baby yawned, and mother Yaśodā saw in His mouth the whole sky, the higher planetary system and the earth, the luminaries in all directions, the sun, the moon, fire, air, the seas, islands, mountains, rivers, forests, and all kinds of living entities, moving and nonmoving.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa had almost completely finished drinking Yaśodā's milk. When Kṛṣṇa yawned, Yaśodā saw the entire (*idam*) universe within His mouth (*mukhe*). In another version of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* it states that while Yaśodā was kissing Kṛṣṇa, she saw the universe in His stomach. Lord Brahmā makes the same point in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.14.16): *kṛtsnasya cāntar jaṭhare jananyā*, "O Lord, You exhibited the universe within Your abdomen before Your mother, Yaśodā."

Though Kṛṣṇa was lying in His mother's lap, by His inconceivable energy He is also the foundation of the whole universe. At the moment Kṛṣṇa yawned, He displayed the

universe with all its details by His inconceivable energy. Yaśodā saw the *antariksa* (outer space or the area between Bhurloka and Bhuvarloka) Bhuvarloka, Svargaloka, Martyaloka and Pātālaloka, the three worlds (*rodasī*), the constellations, the directions, the sun, moon, fire, air, Jambudvipa and the other islands (*dvīpan*), the trees, forest, the daughters (*duhitr*) of the mountains (*nagān*) the rivers, and all moving and non-moving entities.

|| 10.7.37 ||

sā vīkṣya viśvaṁ sahasā rājan sañjāta-vepathuḥ

sammīlya mṛgaśāvākṣī netre āsīt suvismitā

TRANSLATION

When mother Yaśodā saw the whole universe within the mouth of her child, her heart began to throb, and in astonishment she wanted to close her restless eyes.

COMMENTARY

Suddenly or at the same time (*sahasa*) Yaśodā began trembling out of fear. She closed her eyes in order to meditate on Viṣṇu. “Oh Lord, please protect my child from this disturbance.” Yaśodā is described as having deer-like eyes, because she glanced around like a frightened deer. In this way, Kṛṣṇa’s display of power in killing the demons did not diminish the *prema* of His intimate devotees like mother Yaśodā. Rather, due to the appearance of anxiety, their ocean of *prema* increased. The Vrajavāsīs believed that Kṛṣṇa was saved because of the abundant pious activities of Nanda and the *gopas*.

In this case however, Kṛṣṇa simply displayed his power, *aiśvarya-śakti*, without cause (not because of demons). Thoroughly surprised, Yaśodā thought only this: “What has happened to my child.” Yaśodā’s affection did not decrease by thinking of Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Lord. Yaśodā did not need to find a cause for what happened. The cause of her disturbance was deep *prema* alone. This fixed quality of *prema* is continuously glorified. Thus it is described as follows: The energy of the Lord occasionally appeared to test Yaśodā, but she made that energy a servant of her *prema*: *prema devya pariksartham agacchanty antarantara śaktir esa hareh kintu taya sa dasi krt bhavet.*

Thus ends the commentary on the Seventh Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Eight

Lord Kṛṣṇa Shows the Universal Form Within His Mouth

|| 10.8.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

gargaḥ purohito rājan yadūnāṁ sumahā-tapāḥ

vrajaṁ jagāma nandasya vasudeva-pracoditaḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O Mahārāja Parīkṣit, the priest of the Yadu dynasty, namely Gargamuni, who was highly elevated in austerity and penance, was then inspired by Vasudeva to go see Nanda Mahārāja at his home.

COMMENTARY

This chapter describes Kṛṣṇa's name giving ceremony, His crawling and stealing butter, His eating dirt and displaying the universal form. After telling how Kṛṣṇa killed a series of demons up to Tṛṇāvarta, Śukadeva remembered Kṛṣṇa's name giving ceremony, which took place before the killing of Tṛṇāvarta, and then narrated the story.

|| 10.8.2 ||

taṁ dṛṣṭvā parama-prītaḥ pratyutthāya kṛtāñjaliḥ

ānarcādhokṣaja-dhiyā praṇipāta-puraḥsaram

TRANSLATION

When Nanda Mahārāja saw Gargamuni present at his home, Nanda was so pleased that he stood up to receive him with folded hands. Although seeing Gargamuni with his eyes, Nanda Mahārāja could appreciate that Gargamuni was adhokṣaja; that is, he was not an ordinary person seen by material senses.

|| 10.8.3 ||

sūpaviṣṭaṁ kṛtātithyaṁ girā sūnṛtayā munim

nandayitvābravīd brahman pūrṇasya karavāma kim

TRANSLATION

When Gargamuni had been properly received as a guest and was very comfortably seated, Nanda Mahārāja submitted with gentle and submissive words: Dear sir, because you are a devotee, you are full in everything. Yet my duty is to serve you. Kindly order me. What can I do for you?

COMMENTARY

Nanda Mahārāja said, “Since you are complete and fully satisfied within yourself, what service can we possibly render to you? We can do nothing.” Or taking the word *kim* as a question, the sentence can mean, “Do you want something, though you are perfect within yourself? Please tell us and we will try to do that.”

If we take the first meaning, then Gargamuni would answer, “Coming to your house is pointless.” If we take the second sentence, then Gargamuni would reply, “Since I am perfect, what can you do for me.” But one should not think in this way. In both cases coming to Nanda’s house is not pointless, for welcoming a saintly person in a house is very valuable. One can see in the scriptures how Sanat-kumāra came to Pṛthu’s house, and Vāmana came to Bali’s house to bestow their mercy. In this mood Nanda speaks verse three.

|| 10.8.4 ||

mahad-vicalanaṁ nṝṇāṁ gṛhiṇāṁ dīna-cetasām

niḥśreyasāya bhagavān kalpate nānyathā kvacit

TRANSLATION

O my lord, O great devotee, persons like you move from one place to another not for their own interests but for the sake of poor-hearted gṛhasthas [householders]. Otherwise they have no interest in going from one place to another.

COMMENTARY

When great saints leave their *āśramas* and travel outside they bring the highest fortune to the householders. Such mercy is beneficial and necessary for the *gṛhasthas* on earth but not for the *brahmacārīs* or the demigods. *Gṛhasthas* who are humble and think themselves lower than the grass (*dīna-cetasām*) can receive mercy from the wandering mendicants. But proud, hard-hearted *gṛhasthas* with crooked mentalities can never receive mercy from the saints.

|| 10.8.5 ||

jyotiṣām ayanaṁ sākṣād yat taj jñānam atīndriyam

praṇītaṁ bhavatā yena pumān veda parāvaram

TRANSLATION

O great saintly person, you have compiled the astrological knowledge by which one can understand past and present unseen things. By the strength of this knowledge, any human being can understand what he has done in his past life and how it affects his present life. This is known to you.

COMMENTARY

In this verse Nanda Mahārāja begins to intimate his desire to Gargamuni about the *nāma karaṇa* (name giving ceremony) of his son. Nanda Mahārāja said, “Not only do you know the treatise (*ayanaṁ*) about the planets (*jyotiṣām*) from which (*yat*) one can get knowledge beyond gross sense perception, but you have compiled (*praṇīta*) it as well. By astrology one can know the past (*avara*) and future (*para*) of any human being. By examining the charts of this son born to me in my old age, and seeing the lines on His

hands and feet please tell all the auspicious and inauspicious events of the child's future."

|| 10.8.6 ||

tvaṁ hi brahmā-vidāṁ śreṣṭhaḥ saṁskārān kartum arhasi

bālayor anayor nṝṇāṁ janmanā brāhmaṇo guruḥ

TRANSLATION

My lord, you are the best of the brāhmaṇas, especially because you are fully aware of the jyotiḥ-śāstra, the astrological science. Therefore you are naturally the spiritual master of every human being. This being so, since you have kindly come to my house, kindly execute the reformatory activities for my two sons.

COMMENTARY

Nanda Mahārāja continued, "Such a great personality coming to my house is just for my benefit. The benefit is twofold: for the present life and the future life. Of the two, I am now requesting you to deliver the auspiciousness of this present life." Thus Nanda Mahārāja begins to speak: "You are not only the best among astrologers, but you are also the best among those who know God. You are most qualified to perform the necessary *saṁskāras* (purificatory rites) because you are expert in telling the future and in chanting *mantras*."

Gargamuni says, "But these functions should be done by the guru."

Nanda Mahārāja replies, "Just by their birth the *brāhmaṇas* are the spiritual masters for all human beings."

|| 10.8.7 ||

śrī-garga uvāca

yadūnām aham ācāryaḥ khyātaś ca bhuvi sarvadā

sutaṁ mayā saṁskṛtaṁ te manyate devakī-sutam

TRANSLATION

Gargamuni said: My dear Nanda Mahārāja, I am the priestly guide of the Yadu dynasty. This is known everywhere. Therefore, if I perform the purificatory process for your sons, Kaṁsa will consider Them the sons of Devakī.

COMMENTARY

Garga speaks to advise that the *saṁskāras* must be done secretly because of danger to himself and Nanda from Kaṁsa: "Nanda Mahārāja, you are actually a member of the Yadu dynasty, but you are not known as a Yadu because you are not a kṣatriya. However, I am well known as the priest of the Yadus. Therefore, if I don't do this ceremony secretly there will be a lot of doubts."

|| 10.8.8-9 ||

kaṁsaḥ pāpa-matiḥ sakhyaṁ tava cānakadundubheḥ

devakyā aṣṭamo garbho na strī bhavitum arhati

iti sañcintayañ chrutvā devakyā dārikā-vacaḥ

api hantā gatāśaṅkas tarhi tan no 'nayo bhavet

TRANSLATION

Kaṁsa is both a great diplomat and a very sinful man. Therefore, having heard from Yogamāyā, the daughter of Devakī, that the child who will kill him has already been born somewhere else, having heard that the eighth pregnancy of Devakī could not bring forth a female child, and having understood your friendship with Vasudeva, Kaṁsa, upon hearing that the purificatory process has been performed by me, the priest of the Yadu dynasty, may certainly consider all these points and suspect that Kṛṣṇa is the son of Devakī and Vasudeva. Then he might take steps to kill Kṛṣṇa. That would be a catastrophe.

COMMENTARY

Gargamuni continued, "Everyone everywhere will think this. Especially Kaṁsa will pursue this matter."

Nanda Mahārāja replied, "But will Kaṁsa, being a *brahmāvādī*, actually kill you?"

Garga: "Yes, because Kaṁsa is a sinful person (*pāpamatiḥ*) he will kill people like us. He will certainly do it. Because he has already committed violence against your friend (*sakhyaṁ*) Vasudeva, he will do the same to you. His demoniac intelligence will begin to act.

"When Kaṁsa heard the words of Devakī's daughter, he thought: 'It is not possible that the eighth child of Devakī is a girl. My enemy Viṣṇu has certainly been born to Devakī, but by the arrangement of Vasudeva, He was taken to the house of his friend Nanda. My worshipable deity Durgā, who has taken the role of Devakī's daughter, said that He who will kill me has already taken birth somewhere. Having ambiguously stated that Viṣṇu was not born to Devakī, but somewhere else, Durgā has hinted to me that I should search everywhere and quickly kill Him.'

"While thinking in this way and engrossed in looking for his enemy, Kaṁsa, upon hearing about my performance of the *nāma karaṇa*, may conclude that Vasudeva's son is in Nanda's house, and he will come here to kill the child. This will then be a great fault on my part."

|| 10.8.10 ||

śrī-nanda uvāca

alakṣito 'smin rahasi māmakair api go-vraje

kuru dvijāti-saṁskāraṁ svasti-vācana-pūrvakam

TRANSLATION

Nanda Mahārāja said: My dear great sage, if you think that your performing this process of purification will make Kaṁsa suspicious, then secretly chant the Vedic hymns and perform the purifying process of second birth here in the cow shed of my house, without the knowledge of anyone else, even my relatives, for this process of purification is essential.

COMMENTARY

"By good fortune you have come to my house. When will I again receive such an *ācārya* as you? Today we will do only what is minimally required by the *śāstras*, and have all the other festivities with music done on another day." Thinking in this way, Nanda speaks this verse.

māmakair: indicates that not even Nanda's brothers should know.

go vraja: the cow pen is a pure place, and therefore it does not need cleaning. *rahasi:* means that they will not allow entrance for the workers who usually come into the sheds to take the cows for pasturing. *dvijāti:* indicates that Balarāma was a kṣatriya and Kṛṣṇa a vaiśya, so both were eligible for the *nāma karaṇa saṁskāras*. *svasti vācana:* means that the *punyayaha, svasti* and *riddhi mantras* should be recited three times. They must be recited before all auspicious rituals.

|| 10.8.11 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

evaṁ samprārthito vipraḥ sva-cikīrṣitam eva tat

cakāra nāma-karaṇaṁ gūḍho rahasi bālayoḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: Having thus been especially requested by Nanda Mahārāja to do that which he already desired to do, Gargamuni performed the name-giving ceremony for Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma in a solitary place.

|| 10.8.12 ||

śrī-garga uvāca

ayaṁ hi rohiṇī-putro ramayan suhṛdo guṇaiḥ

ākhyāsyate rāma iti balādhikyād balaṁ viduḥ

yadūnām apṛthag-bhāvāt saṅkarṣaṇam uśanty api

TRANSLATION

Gargamuni said: This child, the son of Rohiṇī, will give all happiness to His relatives and friends by His transcendental qualities. Therefore He will be known as Rāma. And because He will manifest extraordinary bodily strength, He will also be known as Bala. Moreover, because He unites two families—Vasudeva's family and the family of Nanda Mahārāja—He will be known as Saṅkarṣaṇa.

COMMENTARY

Gargamuni speaks, “O Nanda, because your linage and Vasudeva’s are the same, and because Balarāma will unite your two families, He will be called Saṅkarṣaṇa.”

The *Hari-vaṁśa* says, “Amongst all the Yadus, you [Nanda Mahārāja] are most dear to me.” Garga did not reveal here that Balarāma was transferred (*ākarṣaṇa*) from the womb of Devakī to Rohiṇī, and thus given the name Saṅkarṣaṇa for that reason.

|| 10.8.13 ||

āsan varṇās trayo hy asya gṛhṇato ’nuyugaṁ tanūḥ

śuklo raktas tathā pīta idānīṁ kṛṣṇatāṁ gataḥ

TRANSLATION

Your son Kṛṣṇa appears as an incarnation in every millennium. In the past, He assumed three different colors—white, red and yellow—and now He has appeared in a blackish color. [In another Dvāpara-yuga, He appeared (as Lord Rāmacandra) in the color of śuka, a parrot.] All such incarnations have now assembled in Kṛṣṇa.]

COMMENTARY

In this verse Garga tells Nanda that his son is a *mahāpurusa*, great personality. “Your son appears in every yuga and has assumed three different colors: red, white and yellow.”

gṛhṇato: indicates that Kṛṣṇa accepts by His own will. “Now (*idānīṁ*) at the end of Dvāpara-yuga, He has taken the form of Kṛṣṇa.’’ That is what Garga wants to convey to Nanda.

The actual meaning however is hidden. Pointing his finger at Nanda’s son, Gargamuni indicates that the white, red and yellow color forms are Kṛṣṇa’s parts or *aṁśas*, and now He has appeared in His full form as the *avatāri*, the source of all *avatāras* (*kṛṣṇatam gatah*). Or the sentence can mean: “The white, red and yellow forms, indicating all the *manvantara-avatāras, līlā-avatāras* and *purusa-avatāras*, are all included in the Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇatam gatah*). The original form of the Lord has now appeared with all the *aṁśas* within Himself.”

The Eleventh Canto of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* states that the Lord comes in Satya-yuga in a white color, a red color in Tretā-yuga, a blackish color in Dvāpara-yuga, and a black color in Kali-yuga. Specific colors and names are linked to specific *yugas*. Taking that statement into account, then does the yellow color mentioned in this verse belong to an *avatāra* or not? One should not say that because the word āsan means past tense for three *avatāras*, that yellow can refer to a fourth *avatāra* appearing in Dvāpara-yuga. We could claim that the word *śyāma* in the Eleventh Canto should read *pīta*, or that *pīta* (yellow) in the present verse should mean *śyāma* by taking the word *apīta* (not yellow) from the *sandhi* of *tatha* and *apīta* (not yellow or pale), with the meaning of *śyāma* in the present verse, But then there is still the problem of the three colored forms, white, red and black.

The word *tanūḥ* is in plural, not singular or dual. Kṛṣṇa appears in three successive *yugas*. He also appears in Dvāpara-yuga out of order, because according to the Eleventh Canto, Kṛṣṇa should be in Kali-yuga. To have the three colors of *avatāras* appearing in each of the previous two *yugas*, and Kṛṣṇa appearing in Dvāpara-yuga, is also not an acceptable proposal. Nor can one claim that *idānīm* should mean the first part of Kali-yuga, and that Kṛṣṇa appears in Kali-yuga (in agreement with Canto Eleven). It is a well known that Kṛṣṇa appeared at the end of Dvāpara-yuga. According to the *Bhāgavatam* (1.18.6), Kali-yuga began the very day and moment Śrī Kṛṣṇa left the earth planet.

The explanation of the verse above (10.8.13) is as follows: The two words *yatha* and *tatha* occur as a pair. Whether they both appear or only one appears, the other must be understood. In this case, the sentence should read: Just as (*yatha*) now (*idānīm*) in Dvāpara-yuga the source of all the *avatāras* appears, and attracts all living entities with His beautiful blackish color (*Kṛṣṇata*). In Kali-yuga (*tatha*) as well, during the first part, all the *avatāras* appear within Him when He takes a yellow form. *Idānīm*, now, is taken in a slightly broad span, from the end of Dvāpara to the first part of Kali-yuga to apply to the appearance of both *avatārīs*, namely Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

That may be so but did the person with a black color, who is now receiving His *nāma karaṇa*, appear in a black form before? Does the word *idānīm* now indicate something new and temporary? The black *avatāra* is not a temporary phenomenon because He existed before, and now He is making another appearance. Not only the black *avatāra*, however, all the *avatāras* existed before. But they are making their appearance now. Therefore the past tense is used (*asa*). Just as the three colors appeared previously in the yugas, now they manifest. Pointing with his finger, Gargamuni says, “This son of yours (*asya*) is *anuyugam tanu*, He who accepts all the avatāra forms yuga after yuga.”

Sūta Gosvāmī has stated that the avatāras are countless (*avatāra hy asankheya*). In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.14.21), Lord Brahmā says: *kva vā kathaṁ vā kali vā*, “O Lord, how do You accept these unlimited forms?” As this is so, in the twenty-eighth *yuga* cycle during Dvāpara and Kali-yuga, the *avatāri* appears in black and yellow forms. At this time, the *śyama* and *kṛṣṇa yuga avatāras* appear within the forms of the *avatāris*.

The Lord's yellow form is mentioned in the *Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma*, which appears in Chapter 189 of the *Dāna-dharma-parva* of *Mahābhārata*: *suvarṇa-varṇo hemāṅgo varāṅgas candanāṅgadī*, "In His early pastimes, the Supreme Lord appears as a householder with a golden complexion. His limbs are beautiful, and His body, smeared with the pulp of sandalwood, seems like molten gold." It further states: *sannyāsa-kṛc chamaḥ sānto niṣṭhā-sānti-parāyaṇaḥ*, "In His later pastimes, the Supreme Lord accepts the *sannyāsā* order, and He is equipoised and peaceful. He is the highest abode of peace and devotion, for He silences the impersonalist nondevotees."

Though this is mentioned in *Mahābhārata*, it is not stated clearly in other places in the śāstra. The reason is that this is a secret matter. Prahlāda Mahārāja states this in an indirect way in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (7.9.38): *channaḥ kalau yad abhavas tri-yugo 'tha sa tvam*, "Because the Lord appears in a hidden way in Kali-yuga, He is addressed as Triyuga." The Lord is hidden because He covers His color and mood with other colors and moods so that contempo-rary people cannot recognize Him. The reason for this invisibility is that Kṛṣṇa desired to know the sweetness of Rādhikā's *prema* by assuming Rādhā's body, and taking up Her emotions and color. Although Śrīmatī Rādhikā is the most hidden and secret of all, the Gaudiya Vaiṣṇavas know this very well.

It is stated in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (11.5.31-32): *nānā-tantra-vidhānena kalāv api tathā śṛṇu...kṛṣṇa-varṇaṁ tviṣākṛṣṇaṁ*;"Now listen to the *śāstric* rules for worshiping the Lord in Kali-yuga. Although His complexion is not blackish, He is Kṛṣṇa Himself. Intelligent people worship the Lord by loudly chanting His holy names." The hidden meaning of this *pramāṇa* (evidence) which appears in the discussion of *yugāvatāras* is proved as previously in an esoteric way. There are two meanings to this verse (11.5.31): *kalāv apī* can mean in all Kali-yugas. Or it can mean the particular Kali-yuga during the twenty-eight cycle in Brahmā's day. King Parīkṣit was already attentive, but nevertheless Śukadeva further attracts his attention by saying *tathā śṛṇu*, "just hear me." Because Śukadeva is going to explain the secret meaning of the *avatāra* described in the scriptures, he tells King Parīksit to pay close attention. In Kali-yuga, the *tantras* (supplementary Vedic scriptures) are the predominant proof, therefore, Śukadeva refers to them, *nānā-tantra-vidhānena*.

Considering the *Bhāgavatam* verse (11.5.32): *kṛṣṇa-varṇaṁ tviṣākṛṣṇaṁ*, it is seen that whenever the Lord appears in Kali-yuga (once in the day of Brahmā), He appears with a dark (*śyāma*) complexion. But His transcendental body is not black like a member of the lower class (*śūdra*). Rather Kṛṣṇa's transcendental body radiates a superbly beautiful effulgence (*tviṣā*) which is *ākṛṣṇaṁ*, brighter than a mound of blue sapphires.

A second meaning of the above verse: In the Kali-yuga appearing in the twenty-eighth *yuga* cycle, the Supreme Lord is of the category (*varṇa*) of Kṛṣṇa but His effulgence is *akṛṣṇa* or *pīta* (yellow). Why yellow? Because in the description of the *yugāvatāras*, the colors white, red and blackish were previously mentioned. The only color left is *pīta*, yellow. Therefore *kṛṣṇa* and *pīta* combine in one body; inside *kṛṣṇa varṇa* (the category

of Kṛṣṇa) and externally *pīta varṇa*. Or *kṛṣṇa varṇa* can mean one who described (*varṇana*) the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa. The meaning of the rest of the verse (11.5.32) *sāṅgopāṅgāstra-pārṣadam*... is clear and the same covered nature described there applies to both interpretations.

|| 10.8.14 ||

prāg ayaṁ vasudevasya kvacij jātas tavātmajaḥ

vāsudeva iti śrīmān abhijñāḥ sampracakṣate

TRANSLATION

For many reasons, this beautiful son of yours sometimes appeared previously as the son of Vasudeva. Therefore, those who are learned sometimes call this child Vāsudeva.

COMMENTARY

Garga informed Nanda that in a previous life (*prāg*) his son was born in a solitary place from Vasudeva and was called Vāsudeva. Not only Garga, but knowledgeable persons also say this. In this way he discloses the fact.

|| 10.8.15 ||

bahūni santi nāmāni rūpāṇi ca sutasya te

guṇa-karmānurūpāṇi tāny ahaṁ veda no janāḥ

TRANSLATION

For this son of yours there are many forms and names according to His transcendental qualities and activities. These are known to me, but people in general do not understand them.

COMMENTARY

“These names Kṛṣṇa and Vāsudeva stated by me are not Your son’s only names. The white and other colored forms spoken by me are not His only forms.” He has other names such as Bhakta-vatsala, Sarvajña and Govardhana-dhāri according to the qualities and activities He manifests. In the name Kṛṣṇa, *kṛs* means *sattārtha*, or “existence,” and *na* means *ānanda*, or “bliss.” According to Keśavācārya and others, He is called Kṛṣṇa because His body, which is composed of *mantras*, attracts (*kṛs*) the devotees and its color is black (*kṛṣṇa*). He is called Govinda because He herds the cows.

“If I, an astrologer, do not know this, what then can be said of the common man?” From Gargamuni’s words Nanda could understand that his son was a *mahāpuruṣa*, who had undergone many births with many names. Gargamuni knew this because he was omniscient.

|| 10.8.16 ||

eṣa vaḥ śreya ādhāsyad gopa-gokula-nandanaḥ

anena sarva-durgāṇi yūyam añjas tariṣyatha

TRANSLATION

To increase the transcendental bliss of the cowherd men of Gokula, this child will always act auspiciously for you. And by His grace only, you will surpass all difficulties.

COMMENTARY

Gargamuni continued, “Your son will produce (*ādhāsyad*) benefit, and give joy (*nandana*) to the cowherd men and the herds of cows (*gokula*).” Or *gopa-gokula-nandana* can refer to Kṛṣṇa’s becoming the son (*nandana*) of all the cowherds and cows by His expansions during the Brahma Vimohana pastime. Or the word *gopa* can be taken as a vocative address to Nanda Mahārāj, ‘O cowherd.’

“By your son’s mercy you will very easily and happily cross over all obstacles. Whenever difficulties arise, your son, who is invested with the powers of Nārāyaṇa, will deliver you. You should therefore take shelter of Him.”

|| 10.8.17 ||

purānena vraja-pate sādhavo dasyu-pīḍitāḥ

arājake rakṣyamāṇā jigyur dasyūn samedhitāḥ

TRANSLATION

O Nanda Mahārāja, as recorded in history, when there was an irregular, incapable government, Indra having been dethroned, and people were being harassed and disturbed by thieves, this child appeared in order to protect the people and enable them to flourish, and He curbed the rogues and thieves.

COMMENTARY

In another birth (*purā*) the demigods (*sādhavo*), who were harassed by the demons (*dasyu*) and bereft of their king (*ārajake*) Indra, were protected and made strong by your son.

|| 10.8.18 ||

ya etasmin mahā-bhāgāḥ prītiṁ kurvanti mānavāḥ

nārayo 'bhibhavanty etān viṣṇu-pakṣān ivāsurāḥ

TRANSLATION

Demons [asuras] cannot harm the demigods, who always have Lord Viṣṇu on their side. Similarly, any person or group attached to Kṛṣṇa is extremely fortunate. Because such persons are very much affectionate toward Kṛṣṇa, they cannot be defeated by demons like the associates of Kaṁsa [or by the internal enemies, the senses].

|| 10.8.19 ||

tasmān nandātmajo 'yaṁ te nārāyaṇa-samo guṇaiḥ

śriyā kīrtyānubhāvena gopāyasva samāhitaḥ

TRANSLATION

In conclusion, therefore, O Nanda Mahārāja, this child of yours is as good as Nārāyaṇa. In His transcendental qualities, opulence, name, fame and influence, He is exactly like Nārāyaṇa. You should all raise this child very carefully and cautiously.

COMMENTARY

"Because your *iṣtadeva* has been pleased he has given you a son like Nārāyaṇa." This is the intent of this verse.

"It is prescribed that you should chant the names Mukuṇda, Madhusūdana and Nārāyaṇa. In all good things there are obstacles, so therefore at every moment protect

(*gopāyasva*) your son carefully. This son whom you protect will in turn protect you from all disturbances just like Nārāyaṇa."

Taking the meaning of *nārāyaṇa-samo* to mean "to whom Nārāyaṇa is equal," there is an inference of the inferiority of Nārāyaṇa. The meaning would then be, "You have a son to whom Nārāyaṇa is equal in qualities, but actually Kṛṣṇa is much more attractive than Nārāyaṇa in other major qualities, such as granting liberation to the demons, giving *mahābhāva* to His devotees, and displaying the rāsa-līla which is unattainable by Laksmī."

There is an alternative reading to the phrase *gopāyasva samāhitaḥ*. It can mean the same as *gopāyasva*: to protect carefully; or it can also be taken as *gopa āya*: gain of the *gopas*, cowherd men. With *susamāhitah* it would mean, "Kṛṣṇa intently desires gain or good fortune for the cowherds."

|| 10.8.20 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

ity ātmānaṁ samādiśya garge ca sva-gṛhaṁ gate

nandaḥ pramudito mene ātmānaṁ pūrṇam āśiṣām

TRANSLATION

Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: After Gargamuni, having instructed Nanda Mahārāja about Kṛṣṇa, departed for his own home, Nanda Mahārāja was very pleased and considered himself full of all good fortune.

COMMENTARY

He who attracted the life of Pūtanā and Śakaṭāsura also attracted the mind of the highly qualified Garga. Garga returned home after withdrawing his mind from Kṛṣṇa and directing it back to himself (*ātmānaṁ samādiśya*).

|| 10.8.21 ||

kālena vrajatālpena gokule rāma-keśavau

jānubhyāṁ saha pāṇibhyāṁ riṅgamāṇau vijahratuḥ

TRANSLATION

After a short time passed, both brothers, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, began to crawl on the ground of Vraja with the strength of Their hands and knees and thus enjoy Their childhood play.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa's pastimes mixed with *aiśvarya* (grandeur), such as killing Pūtanā, and His *suddha-mādhurya-līlā*, pure sweet pastimes, are both presented. Both are worthy of remembrance by Kṛṣṇa's devotees.

|| 10.8.22 ||

tāv aṅghri-yugmam anukṛṣya sarīsṛpantau

ghoṣa-praghoṣa-ruciraṁ vraja-kardameṣu

tan-nāda-hṛṣṭa-manasāv anusṛtya lokaṁ

mugdha-prabhītavad upeyatur anti mātroḥ

TRANSLATION

When Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, with the strength of Their legs, crawled in the muddy places created in Vraja by cow dung and cow urine, Their crawling resembled the crawling of serpents, and the sound of Their ankle bells was very charming. Very much pleased by the sound of other people's ankle bells, They used to follow these people as if going to Their mothers, but when They saw that these were other people, They became afraid and returned to Their real mothers, Yaśodā and Rohiṇī.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma crawled about the courtyard on Their hands and knees, and in a crooked way They moved through the dirt which was mixed with cow milk and urine. Their ankle bells tinkled pleasantly like the sound of *karatālas* or the voices of the *gopīs* and *gopas* (*ghosa praghosa*). The cowherd men became blissful upon hearing Their jingling ankle bells. Śrīdhara Swāmi says *ghosa* means bells. When strangers came in the yard, the two boys, thinking they were Their mothers, would joyfully crawl after them. When They realized Their mistake, the two brothers would suddenly become fearful and scamper back to Their mothers.

mugdha bhītavad: enchanted and afraid; The suffix *vad* is used to indicate that Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were playing the part of ordinary children who make mistakes and experience fear. But in reality They were not ordinary children.

|| 10.8.23 ||

tan-mātarau nija-sutau ghṛṇayā snuvantyau

paṅkāṅga-rāga-rucirāv upagṛhya dorbhyām

dattvā stanaṁ prapibatoḥ sma mukhaṁ nirīkṣya

mugdha-smitālpa-daśanaṁ yayatuḥ pramodam

TRANSLATION

Dressed with muddy earth mixed with cow dung and cow urine, the babies looked very beautiful, and when They went to Their mothers, both Yaśodā and Rohiṇī picked Them up with great affection, embraced Them and allowed Them to suck the milk flowing from their breasts. While sucking the breast, the babies smiled, and Their small teeth were visible. Their mothers, upon seeing those beautiful teeth, enjoyed great transcendental bliss.

COMMENTARY

Mother Yaśodā and Rohiṇī felt tremendous joy upon lifting the two children in their arms. The two mothers took both children as their own, and the two children took both mothers as Their own. Due to motherly affection (*ghṛṇayā*), milk flowed freely (*snuvantyau*) from the breasts of Yaśodā and Rohiṇī. The dust on the bodies of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma enhanced Their beauty and attraction just like cosmetics. This is established by using the metaphor of *sundare kim na sundaram:* an ornament looks more beautiful on a beautiful person. Mouth (*mukhaṁ*) is in the singular because each mother concentrated on the mouth of one child. The mothers derived great pleasure from seeing one or two small teeth (*ālpa daśanaṁ mukham*) in their innocent, smiling mouths (*mugdha smita*).

|| 10.8.24 ||

yarhy aṅganā-darśanīya-kumāra-līlāv

antar-vraje tad abalāḥ pragṛhīta-pucchaiḥ

vatsair itas tata ubhāv anukṛṣyamāṇau

prekṣantya ujjhita-gṛhā jahṛṣur hasantyaḥ

TRANSLATION

Within the house of Nanda Mahārāja, the cowherd ladies would enjoy seeing the pastimes of the babies Rāma and Kṛṣṇa. The babies would catch the ends of the calves' tails, and the calves would drag Them here and there. When the ladies saw these pastimes, they certainly stopped their household activities and laughed and enjoyed the incidents.

COMMENTARY

As Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma grew in size and beauty, and performed Their childhood pastimes (*kumāra-līlā*), They became very attractive to all the ladies (*aṅganā-darśanīya*). The women of Vraja (*abalāḥ*) became blissful (*jahṛṣur*) upon seeing the boy's enjoying Their pastimes.

What pranks did the divine brothers perform? Sometimes Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma would grab the tails of the calves lying on the ground. Startled, the calves would jump up and run away while dragging the boys along the ground behind them. Instead of letting go, the boys would clutch their tails even more tightly out of fear and begin crying. The *gopīs* would laugh and say to the boys, "You are weaker than these small calves still taking milk from the udder." Then they would free Their hands from the calves' tails.

|| 10.8.25 ||

śṛṅgy-agni-daṁṣṭry-asi-jala-dvija-kaṇṭakebhyaḥ

krīḍā-parāv aticalau sva-sutau niṣeddhum

gṛhyāṇi kartum api yatra na taj-jananyau

śekāta āpatur alaṁ manaso 'navasthām

TRANSLATION

When mother Yaśodā and Rohiṇī were unable to protect the babies from calamities threatened by horned cows, by fire, by animals with claws and teeth such as monkeys, dogs and cats, and by thorns, swords and other weapons on the ground, they were always in anxiety, and their household engagements were disturbed. At that time, they were fully equipoised in the transcendental ecstasy known as the distress of material affection, for this was aroused within their minds.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were very naughty (*aticalau*). Because They wanted to play with the horned creatures (*śṛṅgi*) like bulls, creatures with sharp teeth (*daṁṣṭri*) like dogs, fire, knives and birds (*dvija*), the mothers could not properly perform their house hold duties. Thus their minds became disturbed (*anavasatha*). This is a *sañcārī bhāva* that nourished the *vātsalya rasa*, motherly love of the elderly *gopīs*.

|| 10.8.26 ||

kālenālpena rājarṣe rāmaḥ kṛṣṇaś ca gokule

aghṛṣṭa-jānubhiḥ padbhir vicakramatur añjasā

TRANSLATION

O King Parīkṣit, within a very short time both Rāma and Kṛṣṇa began to walk very easily in Gokula on Their legs, by Their own strength, without the need to crawl.

COMMENTARY

Without scrapping Their knees on the ground (*aghṛṣṭa jānubhiḥ*), Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma effortlessly (*añjasā*) began walking about Gokula. The word añjasā is sometimes substituted with the word ojasa, which means boldly. In other words, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma stopped crawling and started walking boldly around Gokula.

|| 10.8.27 ||

tatas tu bhagavān kṛṣṇo vayasyair vraja-bālakaiḥ

saha-rāmo vraja-strīṇāṁ cikrīḍe janayan mudam

TRANSLATION

Thereafter, Lord Kṛṣṇa, along with Balarāma, began to play with the other children of the cowherd men, thus awakening the transcendental bliss of the cowherd women.

COMMENTARY

In the pastimes of stealing butter, Kṛṣṇa was the predominant figure. Therefore, in this verse Kṛṣṇa is described as *saha-rāmo*, along with Balarāma.

|| 10.8.28 ||

kṛṣṇasya gopyo ruciraṁ vīkṣya kaumāra-cāpalam

śṛṇvantyāḥ kila tan-mātur iti hocuḥ samāgatāḥ

TRANSLATION

Observing the very attractive childish restlessness of Kṛṣṇa, all the gopīs in the neighborhood, to hear about Kṛṣṇa's activities again and again, would approach mother Yaśodā and speak to her as follows.

COMMENTARY

Seeing the naughty pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and enjoying (*ruciraṁ*) them very much, the *gopīs* in the neighborhood would approach Yaśodā and tell her what they saw. When they would gather in Yaśodā's house, Yaśodā would stop her many household chores and listen to the activities of her child. On the pretext of reprimanding her for not controlling her restless son, the *gopīs* would give great joy to mother Yaśodā.

|| 10.8.29 ||

vatsān muñcan kvacid asamaye krośa-sañjāta-hāsaḥ

steyaṁ svādv atty atha dadhi-payaḥ kalpitaiḥ steya-yogaiḥ

markān bhokṣyan vibhajati sa cen nātti bhāṇḍaṁ bhinnatti

dravyālābhe sagṛha-kupito yāty upakrośya tokān

TRANSLATION

"Our dear friend Yaśodā, your son sometimes comes to our houses before the milking of the cows and releases the calves, and when the master of the house becomes angry, your son merely smiles. Sometimes He devises some process by which He steals palatable curd, butter and milk, which He then eats and drinks. When the monkeys assemble, He divides it with them, and when the monkeys have their bellies so full that they won't take more, He breaks the pots. Sometimes, if He gets no opportunity to steal butter or milk from a house, He

will be angry at the householders, and for His revenge He will agitate the small children by pinching them. Then, when the children begin crying, Kṛṣṇa will go away.

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs* said, “Mother Yaśodā, just hear about your son’s mischievous deeds! Just before dawn, Your restless son walks around the neighborhood looking for an opportunity to steal some yogurt. Before the milking time (*asamaye*) He releases the calves, and they proceed to drink all their mother’s milk. When everyone runs hither and thither to catch the calves, Kṛṣṇa stealthily enters their houses, steals yogurt and runs away. One day when that yogurt thief came, we shouted ‘Beat Him! Tie Him up!’ But He smiled ever so sweetly. Smitten by His intoxicating smile, we forgot everything. Stunned, we just watched Him do His dirty work without responding. Sitting calmly He ate our milk and butter without even running away, while we stood by totally bewildered.”

Yaśodā replied, “In that case why didn’t you just let Him eat till his belly was full?”

Gopīs: “He is always being fed by you so He has no hunger. It is not a question of hunger. He has a taste for stealing. He likes to steal milk and yogurt. He does not like it if we give it to Him. Being skillful at releasing the calves and at smiling, Kṛṣṇa steals in two ways: beyond our sight and before our eyes.

“Using His intelligence He finds different ways to steal. One day even before eating the yogurt Himself, He distributed it to the monkeys. When all the monkeys had taken their fill and could eat no more, Kṛṣṇa thought, “Without you what is the use of My eating? So I will not eat.” Then in anger He broke the yogurt pots.

“When He enters a house and does not find any yogurt, He becomes angry at the occupants (*sagṛha*) and says, ‘Stay here. I will come back tomorrow morning with a flaming torch in My hand. If you don’t give Me some yogurt, I will burn down your house along with your relatives and children.’ After saying that Kṛṣṇa makes the small children cry by scratching them with His nails.”

|| 10.8.30 ||

hastāgrāhye racayati vidhiṁ pīṭhakolūkhalādyaiś

chidraṁ hy antar-nihita-vayunaḥ śikya-bhāṇḍeṣu tad-vit

dhvāntāgāre dhṛta-maṇi-gaṇaṁ svāṅgam artha-pradīpaṁ

kāle gopyo yarhi gṛha-kṛtyeṣu suvyagra-cittāḥ

TRANSLATION

"When the milk and curd are kept high on a swing hanging from the ceiling and Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma cannot reach it, They arrange to reach it by piling up various planks and turning upside down the mortar for grinding spices. Being quite aware of the contents of a pot, They pick holes in it. While the elderly gopīs go about their household affairs, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma sometimes go into a dark room, brightening the place with the valuable jewels and ornaments on Their bodies and taking advantage of this light by stealing.

COMMENTARY

The gopīs continue, "Another day He entered a house where the yogurt pot was beyond reach, so He devised a method to get it (*vidhim racayati*). Sometimes He piles up chairs, climbs atop a grinding mortar, or the shoulders of a friend. Just by seeing the exterior of a pot hanging from the ceiling on a string (*śikabhāṇḍesu*), He knows (*vayunaḥ*) its contents. If He cannot loot the pot, He makes a hole in it with a pole having a sharp iron point. He is very learned in all this work (*tadvit*): how to put a hole in the pot, how to make the yogurt pour out, and how to open the mouths of the boys so they can take their fill. Even a dark storeroom is no obstacle for Kṛṣṇa and His friends. The brilliant jewels on their bodies (*svāṅgam*) act as lamps to brighten the room. He knows all the tricks of the trade."

Yaśodā replies, "Why aren't you more careful?"

Gopīs: "Your son only comes when everyone is busily engaged in household affairs. Though Kṛṣṇa has already stolen our hearts with the bewitching power of His gentle smile, His baby talk, His sweet movements and His beautiful body, still He likes to steal our yogurt on the sly. Before stealing, Kṛṣṇa sends some boys as spies to find out who's there in the *gopīs*' homes."

|| 10.8.31 ||

evaṁ dhārṣṭyāny uśati kurute mehanādīni vāstau

steyopāyair viracita-kṛtiḥ supratīko yathāste

itthaṁ strībhiḥ sa-bhaya-nayana-śrī-mukhālokinībhir

vyākhyātārthā prahasita-mukhī na hy upālabdhum aicchat

TRANSLATION

"When Kṛṣṇa is caught in His naughty activities, the master of the house will say to Him, 'Oh, You are a thief,' and artificially express anger at Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa will then reply, 'I am not a thief. You are a thief.' Sometimes, being angry, Kṛṣṇa passes urine and stool in a neat, clean place in our houses. But now, our dear friend Yaśodā, this expert thief is sitting before you like a very good boy." Sometimes all the gopīs would look at Kṛṣṇa sitting there, His eyes fearful so that His mother would not chastise Him, and when they saw Kṛṣṇa's beautiful face, instead of chastising Him they would simply look upon His face and enjoy transcendental bliss. Mother Yaśodā would mildly smile at all this fun, and she would not want to chastise her blessed transcendental child.

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs* continue, "O Yaśodā, oh famous one, you appear very blissful on hearing the pastimes of your son. It is not only that He steals. He also passes stool and urine (*mehanādīni*) in the room set aside for worship (*vāstau*) and thus contaminates it. He also pulls the ladies' braids and saris, kicks them and proposes marriage to them. In the future this son will bring you lots of wealth. Now He is stealing yogurt, but when He grows up He will steal others' money and wives. But now He looks very innocent in front of you (*supratīkah*)."

Now the result of the gopīs' loving criticism is stated. Thinking Yaśodā might beat Him, Kṛṣṇa showed fear in His eyes and His beautiful face trembled. The gopīs could not help but look at Kṛṣṇa's charming face. Everything was told to Yaśodā (*vyākhyāta arthā*), who had become blissful on seeing Kṛṣṇa's face, which was illuminated with different emotions, and by hearing about His wonderful pranks. Yaśodā simply beamed a wide smile (*prahasita mukha*), but she harbored no desire to scold her son.

Yaśodā thought, "Let the gopīs drown in bliss by my son's mischief making. And when such incidents are reported to me, let these stories drown me in bliss too." Though not explicitly stated here, this mood should be understood.

|| 10.8.32 ||

ekadā krīḍamānās te rāmādyā gopa-dārakāḥ

kṛṣṇo mṛdaṁ bhakṣitavān iti mātre nyavedayan

TRANSLATION

One day while Kṛṣṇa was playing with His small playmates, including Balarāma and other sons of the gopas, all His friends came together and lodged a complaint to mother Yaśodā. "Mother," they submitted, "Kṛṣṇa has eaten earth."

COMMENTARY

The taste of maternal affection (*vātsalya rasa*) by the *gopīs* finding fault in Kṛṣṇa has been completed. This verse presents the taste of *vismaya rasa* (astonishment) by the criticisms of Kṛṣṇa's friends. Kṛṣṇa was not scolded for stealing yogurt, but He was scolded for eating dirt. Both were incited by love.

|| 10.8.33 ||

sā gṛhītvā kare kṛṣṇam upālabhya hitaiṣiṇī

yaśodā bhaya-sambhrānta-prekṣaṇākṣam abhāṣata

TRANSLATION

Upon hearing this from Kṛṣṇa's playmates, mother Yaśodā, who was always full of anxiety over Kṛṣṇa's welfare, picked Kṛṣṇa up with her hands to look into His mouth and chastise Him. Her eyes fearful, she spoke to her son as follows.

COMMENTARY

Yaśodā held Kṛṣṇa by the hand for fear that He would run away. Though Yaśodā scolded him, her intention was to benefit (*hitaiṣiṇī*) Him. In this case scolding and beating nourish the *prema*; they are not faults. This is the usual habit of a mother towards her son, so it is not unjust. Kṛṣṇa's eyes were filled with fear. But this fear is an ornament of the Lord caused by *prema*. It is not a fault.

|| 10.8.34 ||

kasmān mṛdam adāntātman bhavān bhakṣitavān rahaḥ

vadanti tāvakā hy ete kumārās te 'grajo 'py ayam

TRANSLATION

Dear Kṛṣṇa, why are You so restless that You have eaten dirt in a solitary place? This complaint has been lodged against You by all Your playmates, including Your elder brother, Balarāma. How is this?

COMMENTARY

Yaśodā said, "O one with restless body and mind! Did You eat dirt? Did You not get sweets in my house? Not in my presence, but stealthily (*rahaḥ*) You have done it. Your friends are saying this, so it cannot be false. You cannot say that they are speaking against You because they want me to beat You, because even Baladeva is saying this. He is standing right here saying this. There is no doubt about it."

|| 10.8.35 ||

nāhaṁ bhakṣitavān amba sarve mithyābhiśaṁsinaḥ

yadi satya-giras tarhi samakṣaṁ paśya me mukham

TRANSLATION

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa replied: My dear mother, I have never eaten dirt. All My friends complaining against Me are liars. If you think they are being truthful, you can directly look into My mouth and examine it.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, "I did not eat dirt." To tell a lie for fear of being beaten is natural for a child, and it nourishes the *vātsalya-bhāva*, parental affection. *Vātsalya* and other *rasas* spring from *prema*, and *prema* rests within a devotee's heart. It arises in the devotee because of Kṛṣṇa's inherent affection for His devotees (*bhakta vatsala*). The Lord's quality of *bhakta vātsalya* is greater than any of His other spiritual qualities such as purity, mercy or truthfulness. As Kṛṣṇa's telling a lie springs from this *bhakta vatsalya*, it is not a fault. Rather it is the crown jewel of all great qualities.

|| 10.8.36 ||

yady evaṁ tarhi vyādehī-ty uktaḥ sa bhagavān hariḥ

vyādattāvyāhataiśvaryaḥ krīḍā-manuja-bālakaḥ

TRANSLATION

Mother Yaśodā challenged Kṛṣṇa, "If You have not eaten earth, then open Your mouth wide." When challenged by His mother in this way, Kṛṣṇa, the son of Nanda Mahārāja and Yaśodā, to exhibit pastimes like a human child, opened His mouth. Although the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, who is full of all opulences, did not disturb His mother's parental affection, His opulence was automatically displayed, for Kṛṣṇa's opulence is never lost at any stage, but is manifest at the proper time.

COMMENTARY

Being afraid of punishment, Kṛṣṇa told a lie so that Yaśodā could not detect His fault. However, how could He do this? If Kṛṣṇa were to open His mouth the evidence would be found. The answer is given: Kṛṣṇa possesses the unimpeded, non-contradictory power of (*āvyāhataiśvaryaḥ*). He whose power is never conquered does not display this power because of the influence of sweetness of love. But looking for service, it finds some opportunity. Inspired by the boy's power of *satya sankalpa* (whose very desire must be fulfilled), this unimpeded *aiśvarya* on its own manifested the universal form, and Yaśodā, lost in astonishment, forgot to scold her son.

Was it necessary for Kṛṣṇa to taste the sweetness of *prema* and thus have to show fear of being beaten? He could have stood there without fear, taking the help of His *aiśvarya śakti*, thinking "I am the Lord." The answer is found in the words *krīḍā pradhāna manuja bālakaḥ*, which means that Kṛṣṇa specifically took the form of a human child to perform many playful, sweet pastimes in Vraja.

|| 10.8.37-39 ||

sā tatra dadṛśe viśvaṁ jagat sthāsnu ca khaṁ diśaḥ

sādri-dvīpābdhi-bhūgolaṁ sa-vāyv-agnīndu-tārakam

jyotiś-cakraṁ jalaṁ tejo nabhasvān viyad eva ca

vaikārikāṇīndriyāṇi mano mātrā guṇās trayaḥ

etad vicitraṁ saha-jīva-kāla-svabhāva-karmāśaya-liṅga-bhedam

sūnos tanau vīkṣya vidāritāsye vrajaṁ sahātmānam avāpa śaṅkām

TRANSLATION

When Kṛṣṇa opened His mouth wide by the order of mother Yaśodā, she saw within His mouth all moving and nonmoving entities, outer space, and all directions, along with mountains, islands, oceans, the surface of the earth, the blowing wind, fire, the moon and the stars. She saw the planetary systems, water, light, air, sky, and creation by transformation of ahaṅkāra. She also saw the senses, the mind, sense perception, and the three qualities goodness, passion and ignorance. She saw the time allotted for the living entities, she saw natural instinct and the reactions of karma, and she saw desires and different varieties of bodies, moving and nonmoving. Seeing all these aspects of the cosmic manifestation, along with herself and Vṛndāvana-dhāma, she became doubtful and fearful of her son's nature.

COMMENTARY

According to the prayers of Lord Brahmā, Yaśodā did not see the universe in Kṛṣṇa's mouth but in His belly. *Jagat* means moving and *sthāsnu* means immobile living entities. *Khaṁ* means *antarikṣa* or *bhuvar loka*, the celestial sky. *Sādri* refers to the whole earth along with its mountains, islands and oceans. *Savāyuh* refers to the blowing wind which moves the planets. *Nabhasvān* means outer space. *Vaikārikāni* is the demigod in charge of the senses.

Gunās trayaḥ are the three material qualities: *sattva, raja* and *tamas*. Yaśodā could see these formless things by seeing the form of their presiding deities, and in when they assumed gross forms. At the same time (*saha*) Yaśodā saw the *jīva* (living entity) and *kāla* (time) which agitates the *gunas*; *svabhava*, the cause of transformation; and *karma āśaya*, the cause of birth and the resultant action and desire for material enjoyment.

Kṛṣṇa showed the variegated universe within which exist all the different forms of bodies. *Tanau* means in Kṛṣṇa's body, but specifically in His belly. Through Kṛṣṇa's wide open mouth, Yaśodā saw all these marvelous things in Kṛṣṇa's belly. She also saw herself along with her son and husband in Vraja. Brahmā's words indicate that this vision was of this particular universe. The universe was simultaneously inside Kṛṣṇa's belly and outside as well by the inconceivable power of *yogamāyā*. By showing Himself within the universe and by pervading the universe at the same time, Kṛṣṇa showed His limited and unlimited natures.

The vision of the Lord in the universe and the universe in the Lord, which was meant for the *śānta-bhaktas* (reverential devotees), was shown to Yaśodā, whose lotus feet are touched by the heads of the *mādhurya-bhaktas* (intimate confidential devotees). Upon attaining this amazing vision, Yaśodā began to worry about her son.

|| 10.8.40 ||

kiṁ svapna etad uta devamāyā kiṁ vā madīyo bata buddhi-mohaḥ

atho amuṣyaiva mamārbhakasya yaḥ kaścanautpattika ātma-yogaḥ

TRANSLATION

[Mother Yaśodā began to argue within herself:] Is this a dream, or is it an illusory creation by the external energy? Has this been manifested by my own intelligence, or is it some mystic power of my child?

Yaśodā began to argue within herself about the cause of the vision: “I am not dreaming, because my eyes are wide open. Is this some illusion created by the demigods? Why should the demigods delude an insignificant person like me? Is it some mental derangement? No, because my mind is stable and in good working order. This vision must be due to some mystic power (*ātma yoga*) of my son, since Gargamuni said He would have qualities like Nārāyaṇa.”

|| 10.8.41 ||

atho yathāvan na vitarka-gocaraṁ ceto-manaḥ-karma-vacobhir añjasā

yad-āśrayaṁ yena yataḥ pratīyate sudurvibhāvyaṁ praṇatāsmi tat-padam

TRANSLATION

Therefore let me surrender unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead and offer my obeisances unto Him, who is beyond the conception of human speculation, the mind, activities, words and arguments, who is the original cause of this cosmic manifestation, by whom the entire cosmos is maintained, and by whom we can conceive of its existence. Let me simply offer my obeisances, for He is beyond my contemplation, speculation and meditation. He is beyond all of my material activities.

COMMENTARY

Yaśodā rejected the last reason after seeing her son's hunger, thirst, naughtiness and innocence. Not finding any real cause of the vision, Yaśodā simply offered respects to the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord, who is the ultimate cause of all things beyond our comprehension, and prayed for His protection.

Yaśodā prayed, "The Supreme Lord is the shelter of the visible universe (*yad āśraya*). He creates the universe (*yataḥ*), and is the visible cause of the universe (*yena*). But He cannot be understood by persons like me (*durvibhavya*). Let me simply offer my respects to His lotus feet (*tat padam*) with my mind, intelligence, actions and words. May He please remove all disturbances from my child."

|| 10.8.42 ||

ahaṁ mamāsau patir eṣa me suto vrajeśvarasyākhila-vittapā satī

gopyaś ca gopāḥ saha-godhanāś ca me yan-māyayetthaṁ kumatiḥ sa me gatiḥ

TRANSLATION

It is by the influence of the Supreme Lord's māyā that I am wrongly thinking that Nanda Mahārāja is my husband, that Kṛṣṇa is my son, and that because I am the queen of Nanda Mahārāja, all the wealth of cows and calves are my possessions and all the cowherd men and their wives are my subjects. Actually, I also am eternally subordinate to the Supreme Lord. He is my ultimate shelter.

COMMENTARY

Yaśodā prayed, "The Supreme Lord maintains and protects my son. If that is so, then what is the use of my foolishly thinking in terms of I and mine?"

Giving up her false conceptions and surrendering to the Lord, Yaśodā speaks: "I think that I am the wife of Nanda Mahārāja, and the Queen of all the cowherd men and women of Vraja. All the wealth and cows are my possessions. I think that Kṛṣṇa, who is the life of the residents of Vraja, is my son and that I am His maintainer. By daily worship of Viṣṇu, the *brāhmaṇas* and the demigods, by meditation and by giving charity, I myself can give protection to my son.

“This is all misconception. I should not be so proud because actually all of Vraja’s wealth has come by the mercy of Viṣṇu. Similarly, it was Viṣṇu’s mercy that my child was protected at every moment from demons like Pūtanā. I should not think that I, as just another mother among the common cowherds with earthly sentiments, am His protector.”

This type of logic is temporary and not permanent in Yaśodā. It is similar to the temporary desire of the confirmed materialist to give up wife and family because of some temporary spiritual urge.

|| 10.8.43 ||

itthaṁ vidita-tattvāyāṁ gopīkāyāṁ sa īśvaraḥ

vaiṣṇavīṁ vyatanon māyāṁ putra-snehamayīṁ vibhuḥ

TRANSLATION

Mother Yaśodā, by the grace of the Lord, could understand the real truth. But then again, the supreme master, by the influence of the internal potency, yogamāyā, inspired her to become absorbed in intense maternal affection for her son.

COMMENTARY

Discerning the truth in this way (*itthaṁ vidita tattvāyaṁ*), Yaśodā desired to give up her sense of possessiveness. But then the Lord as a small boy thought, “Who will cuddle and hold Me?” When Kṛṣṇa thought in this way, Yaśodā was overcome by the very form of affection for her son (*putrasneha mayīṁ*). The word mayīm in this phrase means affection itself, namely *prema* in the form of parental affection, *vātsalya-bhāva*. The word *māyāṁ* here indicates bewilderment. In other words, Yaśodā became blinded by *prema*.

|| 10.8.44 ||

sadyo naṣṭa-smṛtir gopī sāropyāroham ātmajam

pravṛddha-sneha-kalila-hṛdayāsīd yathā purā

TRANSLATION

Immediately forgetting yogamāyā's illusion that Kṛṣṇa had shown the universal form within His mouth, mother Yaśodā took her son on her lap as before, feeling increased affection in her heart for her transcendental child.

COMMENTARY

Just as one quickly forgets a dream, through the influence of māyā, Yaśodā forgot completely about the universal form. In the presence of aiśvarya jñāna (knowledge of the Lord's opulence and majesty), intimacy and affection is restricted. Now being unrestricted, Yaśodā's affection increased even more. Śukadeva describes Yaśodā as *pravrddha sneha kalila hrdaya:* one whose heart was completely covered (*kalila*) with increased affection.

|| 10.8.45 ||

trayyā copaniṣadbhiś ca sāṅkhya-yogaiś ca sātvataiḥ

upagīyamāna-māhātmyaṁ hariṁ sāmanyatātmajam

TRANSLATION

The glories of the Supreme Personality of Godhead are studied through the three Vedas, the Upaniṣads, the literature of Sāṅkhya-yoga, and other Vaiṣṇava literature, yet mother Yaśodā considered that Supreme Person her ordinary child.

COMMENTARY

In this verse, Vyāsadeva shows how Yaśodā's maternal love was superior to that of Devakī. Yaśodā's love remained unrestricted in spite of seeing Kṛṣṇa's powers and hearing about the Lord's powers from the scriptures such as the three Vedas which glorify Kṛṣṇa as the *yajña puruṣa* (Lord Viṣṇu, the personal beneficiary of all sacrifices). Kṛṣṇa is glorified as the *puruṣa* (Supreme Lord) in the *Sāṅkhya śāstras*; the Paramātmā in the *Yoga-sūtras*, and as Bhagavān in the *Pañcarātra* writings (*Sātvata*).

Without regard for time or place, mother Yaśodā considered the all-powerful Lord, who is glorified directly and indirectly in the scriptures, as an ordinary child. Yaśodā thought, "By the mercy of our powerful family deity Lord Nārāyaṇa, who has been satisfied with the austerities and worship executed by Nanda and me, and who has been satisfied with the many austerities of Parjanya, I have been given this son, who the *karmīs* glorify as the Absolute Truth propounded in the scriptures. People accept this because of Gargamuni's statement that Kṛṣṇa is equal in quality to Nārāyaṇa, and because of the stories of Kṛṣṇa's killing gigantic demons like Pūtanā and others. Therefore, everyone believes my son is Nārāyaṇa. But actually He is just my child. If He does not see me for a moment, He becomes very disturbed. I also become disturbed when separated a moment

from Him. Our experience is our proof." In this way, mother Yaśodā thought about Kṛṣṇa.

As the fruitive workers think of the Lord as the *yajña puruṣa* according to the *Vedas*, similarly, Yaśodā thought of the Lord has her son due to her *vātsalya prema*. Just as Kṛṣṇa gives results to the *karmīs* who worship Him, He reciprocated with Yaśodā's maternal affection. But Kṛṣṇa could not respond fully to the amount of affection offered by Yaśodā. Remaining a debtor, Kṛṣṇa was content to be dependent on Yaśodā's mercy and control and cry for her milk. This will become clear in later chapters.

One should take this verse as a *paribhāsa sūtra* of *Kṛṣṇa-līlā*. As a lamp sits in one place in a dark room and lights up the whole room, so that statement in the scriptures which can reveal the meaning of all scriptures or regulate the meaning of the scriptures is called a *paribhāsa-sūtra*. This verse stands as a regulator for all of the pastimes related to *aiśvarya* (displays of power and opulence) shown during Kṛṣṇa's *kaumāra* and *kaiśora* (childhood and youthful) ages in Mathurā, Kurukṣetra and elsewhere.

|| 10.8.46 ||

śrī-rājovāca

nandaḥ kim akarod brahman śreya evaṁ mahodayam

yaśodā ca mahā-bhāgā papau yasyāḥ stanaṁ hariḥ

TRANSLATION

Having heard of the great fortune of mother Yaśodā, Parīkṣit Mahārāja inquired from Śukadeva Gosvāmī: O learned brāhmaṇa, mother Yaśodā's breast milk was sucked by the Supreme Personality of Godhead. What past auspicious activities did she and Nanda Mahārāja perform to achieve such perfection in ecstatic love?

COMMENTARY

Seeing how Yaśodā's love did not diminish in the least even after hearing about and seeing the Lord's powers, and understanding that Yaśodā and Nanda's love far surpassed that of the *karmis* and even the normal devotees, Parīkṣit became greatly astonished and inquired from Śukadeva Gosvāmī.

King Parīkṣit asked, "What pious activities (*sreya mahodayam*) Nanda must have performed to get such great results?" Parīkṣit refers to Yaśodā as *mahābhāga* (most fortunate) because her pious activities were even more.

|| 10.8.47 ||

pitarau nānvavindetāṁ kṛṣṇodārārbhakehitam

gāyanty adyāpi kavayo yal loka-śamalāpaham

TRANSLATION

Although Kṛṣṇa was so pleased with Vasudeva and Devakī that He descended as their son, they could not enjoy Kṛṣṇa's magnanimous childhood pastimes, which are so great that simply chanting about them vanquishes the contamination of the material world. Nanda Mahārāja and Yaśodā, however, enjoyed these pastimes fully, and therefore their position is always better than that of Vasudeva and Devakī.

COMMENTARY

Since Kṛṣṇa also drank Devakī's milk, what is the difference between her and Yaśodā? This verse answers by saying that Devakī and Vasudeva (*pitarau*), who are famous in our family, could not enjoy with their eyes (*na avindetāṁ*) Kṛṣṇa's joyful (*udāra*: giving happiness) childhood pastimes. The word *udāra* (*magnanimous*) also indicates that Rohiṇī, who took the role of Balarāma's mother, and the *gopīs*, who acted as Kṛṣṇa mothers during the stealing of the calves, were not excluded from seeing Kṛṣṇa's joyful childhood pastimes whereas Vasudeva and Devakī were.

|| 10.8.48 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

droṇo vasūnāṁ pravaro dharayā bhāryayā saha

kariṣyamāṇa ādeśān brahmaṇas tam uvāca ha

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: To follow the orders of Lord Brahmā, Droṇa, the best of the Vasus, along with his wife, Dharā, spoke to Lord Brahmā in this way.

COMMENTARY

Because Kṛṣṇa's appearance and His childhood pastimes are eternal, Nanda and Yaśodā should also be *nitya-siddha*, eternally liberated associates of the Lord. A *sādhana-siddha* is not qualified to attain the same post as Nanda and Yaśodā. Knowing this and that his answer should be suitable to the devotional nature of the question, Śukadeva replied to

King Parīkṣit with an indifferent attitude. Following the order of Brahmā means the order to appear as *gopas* and *gopīs* in Vṛndāvana.

|| 10.8.49 ||

jātayor nau mahādeve bhuvi viśveśvare harau

bhaktiḥ syāt paramā loke yayāñjo durgatiṁ taret

TRANSLATION

Droṇa and Dharā said: Please permit us to be born on the planet earth so that after our appearance, the Supreme Lord, the Personality of Godhead, the supreme controller and master of all planets, will also appear and spread devotional service, the ultimate goal of life, so that those born in this material world may very easily be delivered from the miserable condition of materialistic life by accepting this devotional service.

COMMENTARY

This verse refers to their future lives. Mahādeve means one who has great pastimes. Droṇa and Dharā would be born on the earth (*bhuvi*) where the Lord would appear. *Visvesvare* means the Lord who maintains full power though appearing within the material universe. According to the statement of Uddhava in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (3.2.15), Kṛṣṇa, the master of Nārāyaṇa and Brahmā, appeared along with His plenary portions such as MahaViṣṇu, Matsya and Kūrma. In other words, Kṛṣṇa is *pūrṇa* or full. Hari means He who steals the mind. According to the logic of "seeing the result one can infer the cause" the words *paramā bhaktiḥ* must mean *vātsalya bhakti* suitable to a mother and father.

"In the future, others who hear about and glorify the services we rendered to the cowherd boy Kṛṣṇa will easily attain that most difficult to obtain liberation." In this way, Droṇa and Dharā performed pure *sādhana-bhakti* and prayed for pure *prema bhakti*. It was different from the *bhakti* of Pṛśni and Sutapā who performed *bhakti* mixed with austerity and *yoga*. This was explained previously. The result of their *bhakti* was also seen.

|| 10.8.50 ||

astv ity uktaḥ sa bhagavān vraje droṇo mahā-yaśāḥ

jajñe nanda iti khyāto yaśodā sā dharābhavat

TRANSLATION

When Brahmā said, “Yes, let it be so,” the most fortune Droṇa, who was equal to Bhagavān, appeared in Vrajapura, Vṛndāvana, as the most famous Nanda Mahārāja, and his wife, Dharā, appeared as mother Yaśodā.

COMMENTARY

Droṇa was born in Vraja as Nanda and Dharā was born as Yaśodā. Actually it should be understood that Droṇa and Dharā, who were *sādhana-siddhas*, entered into the *nitya-siddha* forms of Nanda and Yaśodā at that time.

|| 10.8.51 ||

tato bhaktir bhagavati putrī-bhūte janārdane

dampatyor nitarām āsīd gopa-gopīṣu bhārata

TRANSLATION

Thereafter, O Mahārāja Parīkṣit, best of the Bhāratas, when the Supreme Personality of Godhead became the son of Nanda Mahārāja and Yaśodā, they maintained continuous, unswerving devotional love in parental affection. And in their association, all the other inhabitants of Vṛndāvana, the gopas and gopīs, developed the culture of kṛṣṇa-bhakti.

COMMENTARY

The word *janā* in *janārdane* means *gopījana*. *ardana* means asking and tormenting. Kṛṣṇa is called Janārdana because He tormented the *gopīs* by stealing butter and other mischief, and by asking for their breast milk. Nanda and Yaśodā’s (*dampatayor*) devotion for Janardana existed from before (*āsīt*), and it was superior (*nitarām*) to that of all the other *gopas* and *gopīs*. It is understood from this that some of the gopas and gopīs had also practiced *bhakti* like Droṇa and Dharā in their previous lives.

|| 10.8.52 ||

kṛṣṇo brahmaṇa ādeśaṁ satyaṁ kartuṁ vraje vibhuḥ

saha-rāmo vasaṁś cakre teṣāṁ prītiṁ sva-līlayā

TRANSLATION

Thus the Supreme Personality, Kṛṣṇa, along with Balarāma, lived in Vrajabhūmi, Vṛndāvana, just to substantiate the benediction of Brahmā. By exhibiting different pastimes in His childhood, He increased the transcendental pleasure of Nanda and the other inhabitants of Vṛndāvana.

COMMENTARY

In order to fulfill the benediction of Brahmā: "May you attain *paramā-bhakti*" Kṛṣṇa, along with Balarāma, instilled *prema* in the hearts of Nanda, Yaśodā and all the other Vrajavāsīs (*cakre teṣāṁ prītiṁ*) through His wonderful pastimes in Vraja Gokula.

Thus ends the commentary on the Eighth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Nine

Mother Yaśodā Binds Lord Kṛṣṇa

|| 10.9.1-2 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

ekadā gṛha-dāsīṣu yaśodā nanda-gehinī

karmāntara-niyuktāsu nirmamantha svayaṁ dadhi

yāni yānīha gītāni tad-bāla-caritāni ca

dadhi-nirmanthane kāle smarantī tāny agāyata

TRANSLATION

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: One day when mother Yaśodā saw that all the maidservants were engaged in other household affairs, she personally began to churn the yogurt. While churning, she remembered the childish activities of Kṛṣṇa, and in her own way she composed songs and enjoyed singing to herself about all those activities.

COMMENTARY

This chapter describes how Kṛṣṇa stopped Yaśodā from churning yogurt in order to drink her breastmilk, and how Yaśodā put Kṛṣṇa down to go elsewhere.

Verse 1: Kṛṣṇa became angry because He was not finished drinking, so He broke the churning pot, stole butter, and was bound up by Mother Yaśodā.

“You bind up the people who are engulfed in theft, anger and other low qualities and make them cry. Now You, who have become implicated in theft, overwhelmed with anger and bound up by Yaśodā, are crying!”

The most astonishing and uncommon parental love (*vātsalya-prema*) wherein Kṛṣṇa became the object (*viṣaya*) and Nanda and Yaśodā were the shelter (*āśrayā*) must have been the result of a most extraordinary and unparalleled form of *sādhana*. Parīkṣit had asked the question to Śukadeva, but the story of Droṇa and Dharā did not reveal such extraordinary *sādhana*. Seeing that Parīkṣit was not too pleased, Śukadeva told him about Kṛṣṇa’s *dāmodara-līlā* to give the real answer to Parīkṣit’s question: “What past auspicious activities did Yaśodā and Nanda Mahārāja perform to achieve the perfection of getting Kṛṣṇa as their son?” (SB 10.8.46)

On the Dipavali Day (festival day of lighting ghee lamps), Yaśodā began churning yogurt for Kṛṣṇa’s pleasure. She became absorbed in thought how from among her husband’s countless cows, there were seven or eight, who were as rare as a horse with one black ear; who ate the most fragrant grass; and who gave the tastiest, fragrant milk for the satisfaction of her son.

Yaśodā personally churned because she wanted to make special butter for her son. How could her servants who often burn the milk do this properly? Driven by a stubbornness arising from *vātsalya-prema*, Yaśodā concluded that others could not do the job properly. From that day forward, Yaśodā resolved that she would prepare all Kṛṣṇa’s butter, milk and other eatables. They would be so tasty that Kṛṣṇa would no longer go to other’s houses to steal. Yaśodā was churning the best yogurt from among countless samples that she had prepared the day before with her own hands.

Verse 2: The ladies of Vraja poeticized all of Kṛṣṇa’s childhood activities. Having collected all these songs, mother Yaśodā began to sing these songs in order to pacify her longing to see Kṛṣṇa, who was sleeping in another room.

|| 10.9.3 ||

kṣaumaṁ vāsaḥ pṛthu-kaṭi-taṭe bibhratī sūtra-naddhaṁ

putra-sneha-snuta-kuca-yugaṁ jāta-kampaṁ ca subhrūḥ

raṇjv-ākarṣa-śrama-bhuja-calat-kaṅkaṇau kuṇḍale ca

svinnaṁ vaktraṁ kabara-vigalan-mālatī nirmamantha

TRANSLATION

Dressed in a saffron-yellow sari, with a belt tied about her full hips, mother Yaśodā pulled on the churning rope, laboring considerably, her bangles and earrings moving and vibrating and her whole body shaking. Because of her intense love for her child, her breasts were wet with milk. Her face, with its very beautiful eyebrows, was wet with perspiration, and *mālatī* flowers were falling from her hair.

COMMENTARY

This verse presents the ideal of motherly affection for Kṛṣṇa. Anyone interested in cultivating *vātsalya-bhava*, parental love, should meditate upon the bodily form, qualities, features and affection of mother Yaśodā described here.

Yaśodā's yellow sari (*kṣaumaṁ*) was very fine, being made from fibers of the *atasi* tree. According to the *Krama Dīpikā*, Yaśodā's complexion was blackish. She wore a belt around her full hips while churning the butter. The beauty of all of Yaśodā's limbs is indicated just by mentioning her wide hips, moving eyebrows and tinkling bangles. Her arms, tired from churning, and her sweating face both shone. *Mālatī* flowers fell like drops of rain from Yaśodā's beautiful hair, which was blacker than a rain cloud.

|| 10.9.4 ||

tāṁ stanya-kāma āsādya mathnantīṁ jananīṁ hariḥ

gṛhītvā dadhi-manthānaṁ nyaṣedhat prītim āvahan

TRANSLATION

While mother Yaśodā was churning butter, Lord Kṛṣṇa, desiring to drink the milk of her breast, appeared before her, and in order to increase her transcendental pleasure, He caught hold of the churning rod and began to prevent her from churning.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa started crying from hunger upon waking in the morning. Leaving His room, Kṛṣṇa approached Yaśodā and held the churning rod to indicate she should stop churning and attend to Him. Yaśodā's bliss increased unlimitedly upon perceiving Kṛṣṇa's cleverness.

|| 10.9.5 ||

tam aṅkam ārūḍham apāyayat stanaṁ

sneha-snutaṁ sa-smitam īkṣatī mukham

atṛptam utsṛjya javena sā yayāv

utsicyamāne payasi tv adhiśrite

TRANSLATION

Mother Yaśodā then embraced Kṛṣṇa, allowed Him to sit down on her lap, and began to look upon the face of the Lord with great love and affection. Because of her intense affection, milk was flowing from her breast. But when she saw that the milk pan on the oven was boiling over, she immediately left her son to take care of the overflowing milk, although the child was not yet fully satisfied with drinking the milk of His mother's breast.

COMMENTARY

"Oh how intelligent this child is!" Saying this, Yaśodā stopped churning and put Kṛṣṇa on her lap to feed Him her breast-milk. But why did mother Yaśodā suddenly get up and leave? She got up to attend to the milk boiling over on the stove.

But how could Yaśodā show so much interest in the boiling milk that she left Kṛṣṇa unsatisfied and hungry? Yaśodā was so concerned for what Kṛṣṇa would eat and drink that she could temporarily ignore Kṛṣṇa. Only those under the sway of *prema* can understand or talk about the remarkable actions of one impelled by pure love for Kṛṣṇa. No one else can understand these matters.

|| 10.9.6 ||

sañjāta-kopaḥ sphuritāruṇādharaṁ sandaśya dadbhir dadhi-mantha-bhājanam

bhittvā mṛṣāśrur dṛṣad-aśmanā raho jaghāsa haiyaṅgavam antaraṁ gataḥ

TRANSLATION

Being very angry and biting His reddish lips with His teeth, Kṛṣṇa, with false tears in His eyes, broke the container of yogurt with a piece of stone. Then He entered a room and began to eat the freshly churned butter in a solitary place.

COMMENTARY

Though it was useless (*mṛṣāśrur*), Kṛṣṇa shed tears as this is the nature of a small child. Kṛṣṇa used a stone (*dṛṣad-aśmanā*) to make a hole in the pot without making any sound. Then He went into another room and ate the butter made from the previous day's milk (*haiyaṇgavam*).

|| 10.9.7 ||

uttārya gopī suśṛtaṁ payaḥ punaḥ

praviśya saṁdṛśya ca dadhy-amatrakam

bhagnaṁ vilokya sva-sutasya karma taj

jahāsa taṁ cāpi na tatra paśyatī

TRANSLATION

Mother Yaśodā, after taking down the hot milk from the oven, returned to the churning spot, and when she saw that the container of yogurt was broken and that Kṛṣṇa was not present, she concluded that the breaking of the pot was the work of Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

After removing the hot milk (*suśṛtaṁ payaḥ*) from the stove, Yaśodā returned to the churning spot. There she saw the sturdy shiny yogurt pot (*dadhy amatrakam*) lying broken on the floor. The suffix ka is added to *amatrakam* out of sympathy for its sorry state. Yaśodā concluded that this was definitely the work of her son. Touching her forefinger to her nose, she started laughing.

|| 10.9.8 ||

ulūkhalāṅghrer upari vyavasthitaṁ

markāya kāmaṁ dadataṁ śici sthitam

haiyaṅgavaṁ caurya-viśaṅkitekṣaṇaṁ

nirīkṣya paścāt sutam āgamac chanaiḥ

TRANSLATION

Kṛṣṇa, at that time, was sitting on an upside-down wooden mortar for grinding spices and was distributing milk preparations such as yogurt and butter to the monkeys as He liked. Because of having stolen, He was looking all around with great anxiety, suspecting that He might be chastised by His mother. Mother Yaśodā, upon seeing Him, very cautiously approached Him from behind.

COMMENTARY

Yaśodā found Kṛṣṇa by following His butter-smeared footprints, and hearing the jingling sound of His waist bells, and the noises in the other room. Surmising that Kṛṣṇa was eating butter, Yaśodā's face broke into a smile. A few seconds later, she decided to go into the room. But by that time Kṛṣṇa had gone out the back door and into the yard. There Kṛṣṇa sat cross-legged on top of an upside-down wooden mortar for grinding spices due to fear of crows and other animals. The verse describes this.

After stealing the butter pot hanging from the ceiling of the storeroom, Kṛṣṇa brought it there. He was afraid of being beaten by his mother for having stolen the butter, so He was anxiously looking hither and thither (*caurya viśaṇkitekṣaṇaṇ nirīkṣya*) and looking for a path of escape. Seeing Kṛṣṇa from inside the house by craning her neck, Yaśodā then very cautiously and silently approached Him from behind so that Kṛṣṇa could not see her and that she could catch Him in her hands.

|| 10.9.9 ||

tām ātta-yaṣṭiṁ prāsamīkṣya satvaras

tato 'varuhyāpasasāra bhītavat

gopy anvadhāvan na yam āpa yogināṁ

kṣamaṁ praveṣṭuṁ tapaseritaṁ manaḥ

TRANSLATION

When Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa saw His mother, stick in hand, He very quickly got down from the top of the mortar and began to flee as if very much afraid. Although yogīs try to capture Him as Paramātmā by meditation, desiring to enter into the effulgence of the Lord with great austerities and penances, they fail to reach Him. But mother Yaśodā, thinking that same Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, to be her son, began following Kṛṣṇa to catch Him.

COMMENTARY

Yaśodā held a stick in her hand to instill fear in Kṛṣṇa. He is described as very much afraid (*bhītavat*), because He understood the great affection of His mother, although internally Kṛṣṇa had no fear. Or it can mean that Kṛṣṇa stood up and fled in a fearful manner.

Queen Kunti said in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (1.8.31): *gopy ādade tvayi kṛtāgasi dāma tāvad, yā te daśāśru-kalilāñjana-sambhramākṣam, vaktraṁ ninīya bhaya-bhāvanayā sthitasya, sā māṁ vimohayaii bhīr api yad bibheti*, "O Kṛṣṇa, Yasodā took up a rope to bind You when You committed an offense, and Your perturbed eyes overflooded with tears, which washed the mascara from Your eyes. You were afraid, though fear personified is afraid of You. This sight is bewildering to me."

Yaśodā (*gopy*) chased her son who can never be attained (*na yam āpa*) even by great mystics and yogīs (*yogināṁ*) who perform austerities, penances (*tapaseritaṁ*) and meditation (*manaḥ*) to enter (*praveṣṭum*) Brahman. This point is made clear in verse 21: *nāyaṁ sukhāpo bhagavān*, "Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is not easily attainable."

|| 10.9.10 ||

anvañcamānā jananī bṛhac-calac-

chroṇī-bharākrānta-gatiḥ sumadhyamā

javena visraṁsita-keśa-bandhana-

cyuta-prasūnānugatiḥ parāmṛśat

TRANSLATION

While following Kṛṣṇa, mother Yaśodā, her thin waist overburdened by her heavy breasts, naturally had to reduce her speed. Because of following Kṛṣṇa very swiftly, her hair became loose, and the flowers in her hair were falling after her. Yet she did not fail to capture her son Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

One should not think that just as the yogīs cannot catch Kṛṣṇa, neither could mother Yaśodā. This verse explains that Yaśodā's hair came undone, and the flowers in her hair

fell behind her as if they were following her (*cyuta-prasūna anugatiḥ*). Yaśodā caught (*amṛśat*) Kṛṣṇa from behind (*parā*).

|| 10.9.11 ||

kṛtāgasaṁ taṁ prarudantam akṣiṇī

kaṣantam añjan-maṣiṇī sva-pāṇinā

udvīkṣamāṇaṁ bhaya-vihvalekṣaṇaṁ

haste gṛhītvā bhiṣayanty avāgurat

TRANSLATION

When caught by mother Yaśodā, Kṛṣṇa became more and more afraid and admitted to being an offender. As she looked upon Him, she saw that He was crying, His tears mixing with the black ointment around His eyes, and as He rubbed His eyes with His hands, He smeared the ointment all over His face. Mother Yaśodā, catching her beautiful son by the hand, mildly began to chastise Him.

COMMENTARY

Not only did Yaśodā catch Kṛṣṇa who cannot be realized by the best of yogīs, but she also scolded that Supreme Person, who is constantly praised by Lord Brahmā, Śiva and other exalted demigods. With a stick in her hand Yaśodā instilled fear in Kṛṣṇa, who instills fear in time and death personified. The verse is spoken with this intention.

Kṛṣṇa was rubbing (*kaṣantam*) His eyes (*akṣiṇī*), which were smeared with black ointment (*añjan-maṣiṇī*), with the back of His left hand (*sva pāṇinā*). Mother Yaśodā held Kṛṣṇa's right hand and threatened Him (*bhiṣayanty*) with a stick. Yaśodā mildly chastised Kṛṣṇa: "You have such a restless nature! O friend of the monkeys, the pot breaker! Where will You get butter today? Now I shall bind You so that You cannot steal butter and eat it with Your friends. Are You afraid that I will beat You with this stick?" While rebuking Kṛṣṇa, Yaśodā lifted the stick as if to beat Him, though she would never do such a thing.

|| 10.9.12 ||

tyaktvā yaṣṭiṁ sutaṁ bhītaṁ vijñāyārbhaka-vatsalā

iyeṣa kila taṁ baddhuṁ dāmnātad-vīrya-kovidā

TRANSLATION

Mother Yaśodā was always overwhelmed by intense love for Kṛṣṇa, not knowing who Kṛṣṇa was or how powerful He was. Because of maternal affection for Kṛṣṇa, she never even cared to know who He was. Therefore, when she saw that her son had become excessively afraid, she threw the stick away and desired to bind Him so that He would not commit any further naughty activities.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa pleaded, "Don't beat me!" Yaśodā: "If You don't like getting beaten, why did You break the yogurt pot today?"

Kṛṣṇa: "I won't do that anymore! But throw down the stick."

Mother Yaśodā began to worry: "Maybe my son will run away to the forest out of fear, anger or distress." To prevent this Yaśodā threw away the stick and decided to tie up Kṛṣṇa. Due to being completely absorbed in Kṛṣṇa's sweetness, Yaśodā had no knowledge how powerful He was (*ātad vīrya kovidā*).

|| 10.9.13-14 ||

na cāntar na bahir yasya na pūrvaṁ nāpi cāparam

pūrvāparaṁ bahiś cāntar jagato yo jagac ca yaḥ

taṁ matvātmajam avyaktaṁ martya-liṅgam adhokṣajam

gopīkolūkhale dāmnā babandha prākṛtaṁ yathā

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Personality of Godhead has no beginning and no end, no exterior and no interior, no front and no rear. In other words, He is all-pervading. Because He is not under the influence of the element of time, for Him there is no difference between past, present and future; He exists in His own transcendental form at all times. Being absolute, beyond relativity, He is free from distinctions between cause and effect, although He is the cause and effect of everything. That unmanifested person, who is beyond the perception of the senses, had now appeared as a human child, and mother Yaśodā, considering Him her own ordinary child, bound Him to the wooden mortar with a rope.

COMMENTARY

With the ropes of her intense *prema*, Yaśodā tied up Kṛṣṇa, the all-pervading Lord who binds up everyone from Brahmā to the blade of grass with the modes of material nature. The verse is spoken with this intention.

Limited objects can be bound by surrounding them on the outside. But where can one tie the rope on He who is greater than the greatest, and who has no inside or outside? The verse establishes that Kṛṣṇa pervades all space and time as well. Kṛṣṇa cannot be limited by past, present and future. The unlimited can bind the limited, but in this case it was the opposite. The entire universe, which is created by His power, cannot bind Kṛṣṇa, then what to speak of an insignificant rope within that universe. One cannot say that a little boy cannot bind up the universe, because Yaśodā saw the entire cosmic manifestation within His mouth. How then could Yaśodā bind Him?

The answer is given: Kṛṣṇa was bound by the uncommon motherly love of Yaśodā who thought of Him as her son (*matvā ātmajam*). Though Kṛṣṇa is all powerful, by His inconceivable energy He allows Himself to be controlled by love and bound by His beloveds. Kṛṣṇa is called *avyaktam* (unmanifested) because under the control of love He conceals His powers and appears like a human being (*martya lingam*), even though He is beyond material sense perception (*adhokṣajam*). The power of Yaśodā's love bound up the Lord, who is the aggregate of all consciousness, just as one binds an ordinary child (*prākṛtam*).

|| 10.9.15 ||

tad dāma badhyamānasya svārbhakasya kṛtāgasaḥ

dvy-aṅgulonam abhūt tena sandadhe 'nyac ca gopīkā

TRANSLATION

When mother Yaśodā was trying to bind the offending child, she saw that the binding rope was short by a distance the width of two fingers. Thus she brought another rope to join to it.

COMMENTARY

Though Yaśodā could bind her child by love, and though the size of her lap was small, still the small form of the boy was all-powerful. This is shown in three verses.

Kṛṣṇa was thinking, “I cannot be bound up because I must do my daily duties of stealing yogurt and playing with My friends.” Kṛṣṇa’s *vibhūti-śakti* (the power to show or reveal His opulence) inspired by His *satya saṅkalpa-śakti* (the power to fulfill each and every desire of the Lord) suddenly entered into His body at that time. Thus, the rope remained two fingers too short no matter how many ropes Yaśodā tied together.

|| 10.9.16 ||

yadāsīt tad api nyūnaṁ tenānyad api sandadhe

tad api dvy-aṅgulaṁ nyūnaṁ yad yad ādatta bandhanam

TRANSLATION

This new rope also was short by a measurement of two fingers, and when another rope was joined to it, it was still two fingers too short. As many ropes as she joined, all of them failed; their shortness could not be overcome.

COMMENTARY

Bandhanam means the rope for binding Kṛṣṇa. Whatever ropes Yaśodā joined were two fingers short.

|| 10.9.17 ||

evaṁ sva-geha-dāmāni yaśodā sandadhaty api

gopīnāṁ susmayantīnāṁ smayantī vismitābhavat

TRANSLATION

Thus mother Yaśodā joined whatever ropes were available in the household, but still she failed in her attempt to bind Kṛṣṇa. Mother Yaśodā’s friends, the elderly gopīs in the neighborhood, were smiling and enjoying the fun. Similarly, mother Yaśodā, although laboring in that way, was also smiling. All of them were struck with wonder.

COMMENTARY

All the elderly *gopīs* in the neighborhood were laughing (*gopīnāṁ susmayantīnāṁ*). In her astonishment (*vismitā*), Yaśodā thought: “A rope of one hundred *hastas* (150 feet) does not fit around my son’s waist which measures only one fist. His small waist is not getting any bigger, and the rope is certainly not getting any shorter. But still the rope

does not reach around Him. This is the first amazing thing. Furthermore, when I tie the ropes together, each time it is two fingers short, not three or four fingers. That is the second amazing thing."

|| 10.9.18 ||

sva-mātuḥ svinna-gātrāyā visrasta-kabara-srajaḥ

dṛṣṭvā pariśramaṁ kṛṣṇaḥ kṛpayāsīt sva-bandhane

TRANSLATION

Because of mother Yaśodā's hard labor, her whole body became covered with perspiration, and the flowers and comb were falling from her hair. When child Kṛṣṇa saw His mother thus fatigued, He became merciful to her and agreed to be bound.

COMMENTARY

''As you cannot bind Kṛṣṇa even with all the ropes in the house, then it must be concluded that it is His good fortune that it should not be. Listen Yaśodā, give up this attempt!"

Though the village women advised in this way, Yaśodā was determined: "Even if evening comes and I tie together all the ropes in the whole village, I must find out just once the extent of My son's waist."

Yaśodā wanted to teach a lesson to her son. In her persistence, she would not give up her attempt to bind the Lord. In the competition between Kṛṣṇa and His devotee, the devotee's determination always prevails. Thus, seeing His mother's fatigue, Lord Kṛṣṇa gave up His own persistence, became merciful and allowed Himself to be tied.

Kṛṣṇa's mercy, which reigns as the king of all His potencies and illuminates all others, melts the heart of the Lord and turns it into butter. The appearance of Kṛṣṇa's mercy made His *satya saṅkalpa* and *vibhūti śaktis* immediately disappear. The distance of two fingers was filled by the devotee's effort and hard work (*pariśramaṁ*) and the Lord's causeless mercy (*kṛṣṇa kṛpa*). The *bhakta-niṣṭhā* (firm faith of the devotee) seen in his tireless endeavors to serve and worship the Lord, and the *sva-niṣṭhā* (the steady quality in the Lord), which brings forth His mercy upon seeing the devotee's effort and fatigue caused Kṛṣṇa to be bound. In the absence of these two, the rope will remain two fingers too short. But when *bhakta-niṣṭhā* and *sva-niṣṭhā* are present the Lord can be bound. In this pastime, Kṛṣṇa showed Yaśodā and the whole world that only love can bind the Supreme Lord.

|| 10.9.19 ||

evaṁ sandarśitā hy aṅga hariṇā bhṛtya-vaśyatā

sva-vaśenāpi kṛṣṇena yasyedaṁ seśvaraṁ vaśe

TRANSLATION

O Mahārāja Parīkṣit, this entire universe, with its great, exalted demigods like Lord Śiva, Lord Brahmā and Lord Indra, is under the control of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Yet the Supreme Lord has one transcendental attribute: He comes under the control of His devotees. This was now exhibited by Kṛṣṇa in this pastime.

COMMENTARY

Though Kṛṣṇa possesses all possible powers; He is bound and controlled by *prema*. This bondage, however, being the most astonishing attribute of the Lord, is not a fault but a beautiful transcendental ornament in Kṛṣṇa's personality.

By His very nature Kṛṣṇa is self-satisfied (*ātma rāma*), yet He suffers from hunger. He is *āpta-kāma* (automatically fulfills all of His desires), yet He is dissatisfied and desirous of *prema*. Though Kṛṣṇa is the personification of peace and pure goodness, He becomes angry. Kṛṣṇa is the master of the goddess of fortune, yet He steals butter like a beggar. Though Kṛṣṇa instills fear in all through time and death, He flees in fear of Yaśodā's stick. Though Kṛṣṇa travels at the speed of mind, He is easily caught by the firm grip of His mother. Though Kṛṣṇa is condensed bliss (*sāndrānanda*), He cries in sorrow. Though Kṛṣṇa is unlimited and all-pervading, He is limited by being tied up.

In all these incidents, Kṛṣṇa was directly revealing to Yaśodā His innate quality of being controlled by His devotee. All of this cannot be explained as simply an act or imitation performed by Kṛṣṇa. Such explanations arise from ignorance, and have no proof to support them. Realizing this quality of the Lord, Brahmā, Śiva and Sanat-kumāra became truly astonished.

The *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.11.9) states: *darśayaṁs tad-vidāṁ loka ātmano bhṛtya-vaśyatām vrajasyovāha vai harṣaṁ bhagavān bāla-ceṣṭitaiḥ*, "To pure devotees throughout the world who could understand His activities, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, exhibited how much He can be subdued by His devotees, His servants. In this way He increased the pleasure of the Vrajavāsīs by His childhood activities."

sva vaśena: within the control only of His own self; Though Kṛṣṇa is independent (*sva vaśena*), where do we see His control? Kṛṣṇa controls the entire universe along with millions of powerful demigods (*yasyedaṁ seśvaraṁ vase*). Although Kṛṣṇa is the fully independent, supreme controller, He becomes controlled by the *prema* of His devotees. This *prema*, the essence of Kṛṣṇa's *cit-śakti*, gives rise to the Lord's highest bliss. That has been explained previously.

|| 10.9.20 ||

nemaṁ viriñco na bhavo na śrīr apy aṅga-saṁśrayā

prasādaṁ lebhire gopī yat tat prāpa vimuktidāt

TRANSLATION

Neither Lord Brahmā, nor Lord Śiva, nor even the goddess of fortune, who is always the better half of the Supreme Lord, can obtain from the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the deliverer from this material world, such mercy as received by mother Yaśodā.

COMMENTARY

This verse is spoken on seeing the exceptional devotion of the queen of Vraja, who among all the devotees brought Kṛṣṇa under Her control. *vimukti:* here means *viśeṣa-mukti*, specialized liberation or *prema*. *Vimuktidāt* means Kṛṣṇa, the giver of *prema*.

viriñco: Lord Brahmā; The inconceivable mercy that Yaśodā obtained from Kṛṣṇa, the giver of *prema*, was never received by Brahmā, Śiva (*bhavo*), or even Laksmī-devi (*srīr*).

This verse contains three negative pronouncements; *nemaṁ, na bhavo* and *na śrīr*. Three repetitions emphasize the exceeding absence of mercy offered to these personalities. However, with the word "indeed" (*apy*) the sentence can mean that even though they received mercy, it was not to the extent of Yaśodā.

Lord Brahmā is the son of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the *ādi-guru* of the devotees, *sa ādi-devo jagatāṁ paro guru* (*Bhag*. 2.9.5). As the topmost Vaiṣṇava (*vaiṣṇavānāṁ yathā śambhuḥ*), Śiva is considered superior to Brahmā. The goddess of fortune, Laksmī, who resides on the chest of Viṣṇu, is superior to even Śiva and Brahmā, the shelters of *sākhya* and *dāsya rasa*.

Nevertheless, mother Yaśodā is in the supermost exalted position because she alone obtained such extraordinary mercy from the Lord. It is wrong to think that Yaśodā is a *sādhana siddha*, who got a boon from Brahmā in her previous life time as Dharā. The *prema* of Yaśodā cannot be attained as a result of Brahmā's boon, for Brahmā himself prays to become a blade of grass in Vraja. Indeed, Brahmā is counted in a much, much lower class.

Śukadeva says, "O Parīksit! Although you know about the Nanda and Yaśodā who are famous in the scriptures as *nitya-siddhas*, in answer to your casual question (10.8.46) about their austerities in previous lives I told the story of Droṇa and Dharā, who are very small expansions of Nanda and Yaśodā."

|| 10.9.21 ||

nāyaṁ sukhāpo bhagavān dehināṁ gopīkā-sutaḥ

jñāninām cātma-bhūtānāṁ yathā bhaktimatām iha

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, the son of mother Yaśodā, is accessible to devotees engaged in spontaneous loving service, but He is not as easily accessible to mental speculators, to those striving for self-realization by severe austerities and penances, or to those who consider the body the same as the self.

COMMENTARY

The *Bhāgavatam* propounds *kṛṣṇa-prema* as the highest goal of all human endeavors. *Prema* is permanently situated in Kṛṣṇa's eternally liberated associates, *nitya-siddha parikaras*. Among *nitya-siddhas*, the Vrajavāsīs (residents of Gokula) Yaśodā and Nanda Mahārāja are the best because they control Kṛṣṇa by their *vatsalya-prema*, parental love. One who follows in the footsteps of *nitya-siddhas* like mother Yaśodā can easily obtain *kṛṣṇa-prema*. Kṛṣṇa is not available to others. With this intent the verse is spoken.

dehināṁ gopīkā sutaḥ: The son of the gopī, Kṛṣṇa, is not easily attainable by devotees who still identify with the body (*dehināṁ*), nor by the self-satisfied who no longer identify with the body (*jñāninām*). Although they may sometimes be called *śānta-bhaktas*, or devotees of sorts, they never get the opportunity to serve Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana. They can attain the qualification to serve Kṛṣṇa only by practicing *sādhana*-bhakti under the guidance of the inhabitants of Vraja.

ātma bhutānāṁ: Brahmā, Śiva and Laksmī, mentioned in the previous verse, are *ātma bhutā* (related with the Lord). Brahmā and Śiva are *avatāras* of Kṛṣṇa, and Laksmī is His *svarūpa-śakti*. Yet even these three cannot easily attain Kṛṣṇa, the son of a gopī.

bhaktimatām iha: devotees in this world; This indicates that those who are devoted to Yaśodā or other residents of Vṛndāvana, who are fixed in *sākhya, vātsalya* or *mādhurya rasa*, will easily attain Vraja Kṛṣṇa.

The *svarūpa* of *bhakti* has been defined in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.87.23): *striya uragendra-bhoga-bhuja-daṇḍa-viṣakta-dhiyo*, "How can we, the *śrutis*, get bodies like the *gopī*, who hold Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet on their breasts and are embraced by His serpentine arms?" The śrutis and *munis* attained Kṛṣṇa in Vraja by serving Him in allegiance to the Vraja-gopīs. Brahmā, Śiva and Laksmī could not become subservient to the Vraja-gopīs due to identifying with their positions on their own planets. Others do not surrender and follow the Vrajavāsīs because of insufficient guidance or a lack of taste.

|| 10.9.22 ||

kṛṣṇas tu gṛha-kṛtyeṣu vyagrāyāṁ mātari prabhuḥ

adrākṣīd arjunau pūrvaṁ guhyakau dhanadātmajau

TRANSLATION

While mother Yaśodā was very busy with household affairs, the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa, observed twin trees known as yamala-arjuna, which in a former millennium had been the demigod sons of Kuvera.

COMMENTARY

Though bound by His devotee, Kṛṣṇa is still able to liberate others as will be seen in Chapter Ten.

|| 10.9.23 ||

purā nārada-śāpena vṛkṣatāṁ prāpitau madāt

nalakūvara-maṇigrīvāv iti khyātau śriyānvitau

TRANSLATION

In their former birth, these two sons, known as Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva, were extremely opulent and fortunate. But because of pride and false prestige, they did not care about anyone, and thus Nārada Muni cursed them to become trees.

COMMENTARY

“Out of debt to My mother, I have been bound by her. What can I do to clear this debt?” Thinking in this way, Kṛṣṇa liberated the two trees situated in the yard.

Thus ends the commentary on the Ninth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Ten

Deliverance of the Yamala-arjuna Trees

|| 10.10.1 ||

śrī-rājovāca

kathyatāṁ bhagavann etat tayoḥ śāpasya kāraṇam

yat tad vigarhitaṁ karma yena vā devarṣes tamaḥ

TRANSLATION

King Parīkṣit inquired from Śukadeva Gosvāmī: O great and powerful saint, what was the cause of Nalakūvara's and Maṇigrīva's having been cursed by Nārada Muni? What did they do that was so abominable that even Nārada, the great sage, became angry at them? Kindly describe this to me.

COMMENTARY

This chapter tells the ancient story of Nārada's cursing the sons of Kuvera. Afterwards, the two sons, Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva glorified Kṛṣṇa for granting them a special liberation, namely *kṛṣṇa-prema*. The word "*tamaḥ*" in this verse means anger. What degraded activity did Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva do to incur the wrath of Nārada and get cursed?

|| 10.10.2-3 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

rudrasyānucarau bhūtvā sudṛptau dhanadātmajau

kailāsopavane ramye mandākinyāṁ madotkaṭau

vāruṇīṁ madirāṁ pītvā madāghūrṇita-locanau

strī-janair anugāyadbhiś ceratuḥ puṣpite vane

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O King Parīkṣit, because the two sons of Kuvera had been elevated to the association of Lord Śiva, of which they were very much proud, they were allowed to wander in a garden attached to Kailāsa Hill, on the bank of the Mandākinī River. Taking advantage of this, they used to drink a kind of liquor called Vāruṇī. Accompanied by women singing after them, they would wander in that garden of flowers, their eyes always rolling in intoxication.

|| 10.10.4 ||

antaḥ praviśya gaṅgāyām ambhoja-vana-rājini

cikrīḍatur yuvatibhir gajāv iva kareṇubhiḥ

TRANSLATION

Within the waters of the Mandākinī Ganges, which were crowded with gardens of lotus flowers, the two sons of Kuvera would enjoy young girls, just like two male elephants enjoying in the water with female elephants.

COMMENTARY

How did the two sons of Kuvera enjoy in the Mandākinī Gaṇgā? They entered the Gaṇgā, which was adorned with clumps of lotuses, and began to play with young girls, just as an intoxicated elephant sports with his she elephants.

|| 10.10.5 ||

yadṛcchayā ca devarṣir bhagavāṁs tatra kaurava

apaśyan nārado devau kṣībāṇau samabudhyata

TRANSLATION

O Mahārāja Parīkṣit, by some auspicious opportunity for the two boys, the great saint Devarṣi Nārada once appeared there by chance. Seeing them intoxicated, with rolling eyes, he could understand their situation.

COMMENTARY

Seeing them, Devaṛsi Nārada could understand that they were intoxicated (*ksivanau*).

|| 10.10.6 ||

taṁ dṛṣṭvā vrīḍitā devyo vivastrāḥ śāpa-śaṅkitāḥ

vāsāṁsi paryadhuḥ śīghraṁ vivastrau naiva guhyakau

TRANSLATION

Upon seeing Nārada, the naked young girls of the demigods were very much ashamed. Afraid of being cursed, they covered their bodies with their garments. But the two sons of Kuvera did not do so; instead, not caring about Nārada, they remained naked.

|| 10.10.7 ||

tau dṛṣṭvā madirā-mattau śrī-madāndhau surātmajau

tayor anugrahārthāya śāpaṁ dāsyann idaṁ jagau

TRANSLATION

Seeing the two sons of the demigods naked and intoxicated by opulence and false prestige, Devarṣi Nārada, in order to show them special mercy, desired to give them a special curse. Thus he spoke as follows.

COMMENTARY

Nārada desired to curse Maṇigrīva and Nalakūvara, so that they could meet the Lord directly and thereby get special mercy (*anugraha-arthāya*). When an affectionate mother wants to feed some *kheer* to her son, but finds him deeply sleeping, she will wake him by pinching him. Nārada spoke in a loud voice (*jagau*), so that others would also benefit.

|| 10.10.8 ||

śrī-nārada uvāca

na hy anyo juṣato joṣyān buddhi-bhraṁśo rajo-guṇaḥ

śrī-madād ābhijātyādir yatra strī dyūtam āsavaḥ

TRANSLATION

Nārada Muni said: Among all the attractions of material enjoyment, the attraction of riches bewilders one's intelligence more than having beautiful bodily features, taking birth in an aristocratic family, and being learned. When one is uneducated but falsely puffed up by wealth, the result is that one engages his wealth in enjoying wine, women and gambling.

COMMENTARY

For the man absorbed in enjoying (*juṣato*) the attractive objects (*josyān*) of the material world, pride in taking birth in an aristocratic family and being learned do not destroy the intelligence as much being intoxicated with wealth. In other words, the attraction of riches completely destroys one's intelligence.

ābhijāti: birth in a high family generates excessive pride. *ādir:* knowledge also gives rise to pride. *rajo-gunah:* Since pride in wealth arises from the mode of passion, *raja guṇa* is mentioned in this verse. Pride in wealth induces one to commit many more sins than pride in family or knowledge. The various sins are mentioned in the following four verses: enjoying wine, women and gambling.

|| 10.10.9 ||

hanyante paśavo yatra nirdayair ajitātmabhiḥ

manyamānair imaṁ deham ajarāmṛtyu naśvaram

TRANSLATION

Unable to control their senses, rascals who are falsely proud of their riches or their birth in aristocratic families are so cruel that to maintain their perishable bodies, which they think will never grow old or die, they kill poor animals without mercy. Sometimes they kill animals merely to enjoy an excursion.

COMMENTARY

Although one sees old age and death before his eyes, he continues to think he will never die.

|| 10.10.10 ||

deva-saṁjñitam apy ante kṛmi-viḍ-bhasma-saṁjñitam

bhūta-dhruk tat-kṛte svārthaṁ kiṁ veda nirayo yataḥ

TRANSLATION

While living one may be proud of one's body, thinking oneself a very big man, minister, president or even demigod, but whatever one may be, after death this body will turn either into worms, into stool or into ashes. If one kills poor animals to satisfy the temporary whims of this body, one does not know that he will suffer in his next birth, for such a sinful miscreant must go to hell and suffer the results of his actions.

COMMENTARY

A man may be a king (*deva-saṁjñitam*), but after death he is eaten by dogs and other creatures. If his sons do not burn him, he is eaten by worms and transformed into worm stool. If he is burned he becomes ashes. One who whimsically kills poor animals does not know he will be punished for that killing and sent to hell.

|| 10.10.11 ||

dehaḥ kim anna-dātuḥ svaṁ niṣektur mātur eva ca

mātuḥ pitur vā balinaḥ kretur agneḥ śuno 'pi vā

TRANSLATION

While alive, does this body belong to its employer, to the self, to the father, the mother, or the mother's father? Does it belong to the person who takes it away by force, to the slave master who purchases it, or to the sons who burn it in the fire? Or, if the body is not burned, does it belong to the dogs that eat it? Among the many possible claimants, who is the rightful claimant? Not to ascertain this but instead to maintain the body by sinful activities is not good.

COMMENTARY

This verse shows that many contradictions arise from not understanding the rightful owner of the body. *niṣektur:* refers to the father, who discharges semen to create the child. Is this body the wealth (*svam*) of the father, the mother, or father of the mother?

|| 10.10.12 ||

evaṁ sādhāraṇaṁ deham avyakta-prabhavāpyayam

ko vidvān ātmasāt kṛtvā hanti jantūn ṛte 'sataḥ

TRANSLATION

This body, after all, is produced by the unmanifested nature and again annihilated and merged in the natural elements. Therefore, it is the common property of everyone. Under the circumstances, who but a rascal claims this property as his own and while maintaining it commits such sinful activities as killing animals just to satisfy his whims? Unless one is a rascal, one cannot commit such sinful activities.

COMMENTARY

This body arises from and merges into the *pradhāna*, the material cause of the universe. Who but an ignorant person (*asataḥ*) will accept such a body as one's own (*ātmasāt kṛtva*) and commit violence to animals?

|| 10.10.13 ||

asataḥ śrī-madāndhasya dāridryaṁ param añjanam

ātmaupamyena bhūtāni daridraḥ param īkṣate

TRANSLATION

Atheistic fools and rascals who are very much proud of wealth fail to see things as they are. Therefore, returning them to poverty is the proper ointment for their eyes so they may see things as they are. At least a poverty-stricken man can realize how painful poverty is, and therefore he will not want others to be in a painful condition like his own.

COMMENTARY

This verse gives the remedy for the sickness of pride in wealth. *Param* here means only. Poverty is the only medicine (*param añjanam*) to relieve a person from the blindness arising from pride in wealth. Atheistic fools and rascals who are very much proud of

wealth fail to see things as they are. Therefore, returning them to poverty is the proper ointment for their eyes so they may see things as they are. At least a poverty-stricken man can realize how painful poverty is, and therefore he will not want others to be in a painful condition like his own.

|| 10.10.14 ||

yathā kaṇṭaka-viddhāṅgo jantor necchati tāṁ vyathām

jīva-sāmyaṁ gato liṅgair na tathāviddha-kaṇṭakaḥ

TRANSLATION

By seeing their faces, one whose body has been pricked by pins can understand the pain of others who are pinpricked. Realizing that this pain is the same for everyone, he does not want others to suffer in this way. But one who has never been pricked by pins cannot understand this pain.

COMMENTARY

By seeing the symptoms (*liṅgaiḥ*) of one in pain, such as withering of the face, or by having experienced it oneself, one understands the nature of pain and thereby sympathizes with anyone experiencing pain. One who has not experienced being pierced by a thorn (*āviddha kaṇṭhakaḥ*) cannot understand the pain of others who are pinpricked.

|| 10.10.15 ||

daridro nirahaṁ-stambho muktaḥ sarva-madair iha

kṛcchraṁ yadṛcchayāpnoti tad dhi tasya paraṁ tapaḥ

TRANSLATION

A poverty-stricken man must automatically undergo austerities and penances because he does not have the wealth to possess anything. Thus his false prestige is vanquished. Always in need of food, shelter and clothing, he must be satisfied with what is obtained by the mercy of providence. Undergoing such compulsory austerities is good for him because this purifies him and completely frees him from false ego.

COMMENTARY

A poor man automatically practices detachment which is necessary to attain liberation from material existence. This is expressed in three verses. The poor person is devoid of the false prestige that comes from possessing wealth (*nir-aham-stambha*), and free from pride in family and education.

|| 10.10.16 ||

nityaṁ kṣut-kṣāma-dehasya daridrasyānna-kāṅkṣiṇaḥ

indriyāṇy anuśuṣyanti hiṁsāpi vinivartate

TRANSLATION

Always hungry, longing for sufficient food, a poverty-stricken man gradually becomes weaker and weaker. Having no extra potency, his senses are automatically pacified. A poverty-stricken man, therefore, is unable to perform harmful, envious activities. In other words, such a man automatically gains the results of the austerities and penances adopted voluntarily by saintly persons.

|| 10.10.17 ||

daridrasyaiva yujyante sādhavaḥ sama-darśinaḥ

sadbhiḥ kṣiṇoti taṁ tarṣaṁ tata ārād viśuddhyati

TRANSLATION

Saintly persons may freely associate with those who are poverty-stricken, but not with those who are rich. A poverty-stricken man, by association with saintly persons, very soon becomes uninterested in material desires, and the dirty things within the core of his heart are cleansed away.

COMMENTARY

One should not think that if the poor man has only one desire, that is enough to cause his downfall. He has some relief. Being merciful by nature, Kṛṣṇa's devotees are equal to the rich and poor, and therefore visit both. By associating with the devotee, the poor man gets the opportunity to hear about and worship the Supreme Lord. Thus he becomes fortunate and advances in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. However, a man intoxicated with his wealth derives no benefit from associating with the Lord's devotees. By the power of the devotee's association (*sadbhiḥ*), the poor man tastes the nectar of devotion and thus loses his desire for material enjoyment.

Verse fifteen said that the poor man suffers due to fate (*yadrcchaya*). But the devotee does not get suffering or *bhakti* by *karma*, for the devotee has no *karma*.

|| 10.10.18 ||

sādhūnāṁ sama-cittānāṁ mukunda-caraṇaiṣiṇām

upekṣyaiḥ kiṁ dhana-stambhair asadbhir asad-āśrayaiḥ

TRANSLATION

Saintly persons [sādhus] think of Kṛṣṇa twenty-four hours a day. They have no other interest. Why should people neglect the association of such exalted spiritual personalities and try to associate with materialists, taking shelter of nondevotees, most of whom are proud and rich?

COMMENTARY

The devotee never develops a relationship with the wealthy man attached to his riches. Devotees give up (*upekṣyaiḥ*) the association of nondevotees (*asadbhih*), who are afflicted by pride due to wealth (*dhana stambhaih*), and who associate with and serve other nondevotees (*asad āśrayaiḥ*). However, the devotees do associate with wealthy persons who are devoid of pride and serve the Vaiṣṇavas.

|| 10.10.19 ||

tad ahaṁ mattayor mādhvyā vāruṇyā śrī-madāndhayoḥ

tamo-madaṁ hariṣyāmi straiṇayor ajitātmanoḥ

TRANSLATION

Therefore, since these two persons, drunk with the liquor named Vāruṇī, or Mādhvī, and unable to control their senses, have been blinded by the pride of celestial opulence and have become attached to women, I shall relieve them of their false prestige.

COMMENTARY

What then is the cure for their disease of pride? After considering, Nārada decided on the cure and presented it in four verses. *Mādhvyā* means sweet. *Tamo* means ignorance. Nārada thought, “I will remove the ignorance of these two demigods intoxicated with sweet wine, blinded by pride in wealth and overly attached to women.”

|| 10.10.20-21 ||

yad imau loka-pālasya putrau bhūtvā tamaḥ-plutau

na vivāsasam ātmānaṁ vijānītaḥ sudurmadau

ato 'rhataḥ sthāvaratāṁ syātāṁ naivaṁ yathā punaḥ

smṛtiḥ syān mat-prasādena tatrāpi mad-anugrahāt

vāsudevasya sānnidhyaṁ labdhvā divya-śarac-chate

vṛtte svarlokatāṁ bhūyo labdha-bhaktī bhaviṣyataḥ

TRANSLATION

These two young men, Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva, are by fortune the sons of the great demigod Kuvera, but because of false prestige and madness after drinking liquor, they are so fallen that they are naked but cannot understand that they are. Therefore, because they are living like trees (for trees are naked but are not conscious), these two young men should receive the bodies of trees. This will be proper punishment. Nonetheless, after they become trees and until they are released, by my mercy they will have remembrance of their past sinful activities. Moreover, by my special favor, after the expiry of one hundred years by the measurement of the demigods, they will be able to see the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vāsudeva, face to face, and thus revive their real position as devotees.

COMMENTARY

Nārada thought, "These two demigods deserve to be placed in bodies that cannot move (*sthāvaratāṁ*), such as trees because they are manifesting the qualities of trees: standing naked, not performing any proper action because they do not move, and not speaking. But by my mercy even in the bodies of trees they will retain their memory. After standing as trees for one hundred celestial years (*divya śarac-cate*), they will receive *darśana* of Kṛṣṇa, develop *prema-bhakti*, and attain their original bodies as demigods."

|| 10.10.23 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

evam uktvā sa devarṣir gato nārāyaṇāśramam

nalakūvara-maṇigrīvāv āsatur yamalārjunau

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: Having thus spoken, the great saint Devarṣi Nārada returned to his āśrama, known as Nārāyaṇa-āśrama, and Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva became twin arjuna trees.

|| 10.10.24 ||

ṛṣer bhāgavata-mukhyasya satyaṁ kartuṁ vaco hariḥ

jagāma śanakais tatra yatrāstāṁ yamalārjunau

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, to fulfill the truthfulness of the words of the greatest devotee, Nārada, slowly went to that spot where the twin arjuna trees were standing.

COMMENTARY

The preparations for fulfilling the curse are related in this verse.

|| 10.10.25 ||

devarṣir me priyatamo yad imau dhanadātmajau

tat tathā sādhayiṣyāmi yad gītaṁ tan mahātmanā

TRANSLATION

“Although these two young men are the sons of the very rich Kuvera and I have nothing to do with them, Devarṣi Nārada is My very dear and affectionate devotee, and therefore because he wanted Me to come face to face with them, I must do so for their deliverance.”

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa thought, “Because (*yat*) Nārada is My dear devotee, I will fulfill his words by giving these two demigods whatever (*yad*) was promised by that (*tad*) great soul (*mahātmanā*)”

|| 10.10.26 ||

ity antareṇārjunayoḥ kṛṣṇas tu yamayor yayau

ātma-nirveśa-mātreṇa tiryag-gatam ulūkhalam

TRANSLATION

Having thus spoken, Kṛṣṇa soon entered between the two arjuna trees, and thus the big mortar to which He was bound turned crosswise and stuck between them.

COMMENTARY

Thinking in this way, Kṛṣṇa went between the two *arjuna* trees so that the mortar turned crosswise and got stuck.

|| 10.10.27 ||

bālena niṣkarṣayatānvag ulūkhalaṁ tad

dāmodareṇa tarasotkalitāṅghri-bandhau

niṣpetatuḥ parama-vikramitātivepa-

skandha-pravāla-viṭapau kṛta-caṇḍa-śabdau

TRANSLATION

By dragging behind Him with great force the wooden mortar tied to His belly, the boy Kṛṣṇa uprooted the two trees. By the great strength of the Supreme Person, the two trees, with their trunks, leaves and branches, trembled severely and fell to the ground with a great crash.

COMMENTARY

Dāmodara uprooted the two trees by very forcefully pulling the mortar which dragged behind Him. By the tremendous power (*parama vikramita*) of Kṛṣṇa the two trees, with their trunks, leaves and branches trembled severely (*ativepa*) and fell to the ground.

According to *Hari-vaṁśa*. Kṛṣṇa is called Dāmodara because of being bound up: *sa ca tenaiva nāmnā tu kṛṣṇo vai dāma-bandhanāt goṣṭhe dāmodara iti gopībhiḥ parigīyate.*

|| 10.10.28 ||

tatra śriyā paramayā kakubhaḥ sphurantau

siddhāv upetya kujayor iva jāta-vedāḥ

kṛṣṇaṁ praṇamya śirasākhila-loka-nāthaṁ

baddhāñjalī virajasāv idam ūcatuḥ sma

TRANSLATION

Thereafter, in that very place where the two arjuna trees had fallen, two great, perfect personalities, who appeared like fire personified, came out of the two trees. The effulgence of their beauty illuminating all directions, with bowed heads they offered obeisances to Kṛṣṇa, and with hands folded they spoke the following words.

COMMENTARY

The two persons emerging from the trees (*kujayoḥ*) lit up the four directions (*kakubhaḥ*) with the beautiful effulgence of their bodies which mixed together like fire personified (*jāta-vedāḥ*).

|| 10.10.29 ||

kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa mahā-yogiṁs tvam ādyaḥ puruṣaḥ paraḥ

vyaktāvyaktam idaṁ viśvaṁ rūpaṁ te brāhmaṇā viduḥ

TRANSLATION

O Lord Kṛṣṇa, Lord Kṛṣṇa, Your opulent mysticism is inconceivable. You are the supreme, original person, the cause of all causes, immediate and remote, and You are beyond this material creation. Learned brāhmaṇas know [on the basis of the Vedic statement sarvaṁ khalv idaṁ Brahmā] that You are everything and that this cosmic manifestation, in its gross and subtle aspects, is Your form.

COMMENTARY

At this time Kṛṣṇa could have asked them, “Why are you two demigods paying respects to Me, a mere cowherd boy tied to a mortar?” They answer with this verse. The word Kṛṣṇa is repeated twice to indicate that the demigods spoke together.

Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva prayed, “You are the Supreme Person (*paraḥ puruṣaḥ*), Bhagavān. Although appearing as a cowherd boy, You are the original Svayaṁ Bhagavān (*ādyaḥ*). Oh master of mysticism (*mahā-yogiṁs*), it is inconceivable how You have become bound. Since You can liberate us, how is it possible for You. who are the very form of the universe, to be bound up?” With this intention they speak this verse.

|| 10.10.30-31 ||

tvam ekaḥ sarva-bhūtānāṁ dehāsv-ātmendriyeśvaraḥ

tvam eva kālo bhagavān viṣṇur avyaya īśvaraḥ

tvaṁ mahān prakṛtiḥ sūkṣmā rajaḥ-sattva-tamomayī

tvam eva puruṣo ’dhyakṣaḥ sarva-kṣetra-vikāra-vit

TRANSLATION

You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the controller of everything. The body, life, ego and senses of every living entity are Your own self. You are the Supreme Person, Viṣṇu, the imperishable controller. You are the time factor, the immediate cause, and You are material nature, consisting of the three modes passion, goodness and ignorance. You are the original cause of this material manifestation. You are the Supersoul, and therefore You know everything within the core of the heart of every living entity.

COMMENTARY

Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva continue praying: “No one but You is the cause of bondage. You are the Lord of all because everything is within You. You are thus the Lord of the body, the life force and the ego of every living entity. You are time and the cause of all action. You are material nature. You are also the Supersoul and know everything within the minds of every living entity. Therefore You are the one and only Bhagavān, the controller of everything.”

|| 10.10.32 ||

gṛhyamāṇais tvam agrāhyo vikāraiḥ prākṛtair guṇaiḥ

ko nv ihārhati vijñātuṁ prāk siddhaṁ guṇa-saṁvṛtaḥ

TRANSLATION

O Lord, You exist before the creation. Therefore, who, trapped by a body of material qualities in this material world, can understand You?

COMMENTARY

"You can be seen only by Your mercy. Practically, You are invisible. You are not perceivable by the intelligence and senses because they arise from the modes of nature. Since You are transcendental, no one within this world can know You. You are the cause of the living entity, but he is covered by the modes of material nature. However, Your devotee, who transcends the modes of nature by practicing *bhakti*, can realize something of Your unlimited qualities."

|| 10.10.33 ||

tasmai tubhyaṁ bhagavate vāsudevāya vedhase

ātma-dyota-guṇaiś channa-mahimne brahmaṇe namaḥ

TRANSLATION

O Lord, whose glories are covered by Your own energy, You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead. You are Saṅkarṣaṇa, the origin of creation, and You are Vāsudeva, the origin of the caturvyūha. Because You are everything and are therefore the Supreme Brahman, we simply offer our respectful obeisances unto You.

COMMENTARY

"Since You are difficult to know, we simply offer our respects to You." That is the intention of this verse. "We offer respects to You, the creator of the universe (*vedhase*). Because of the covering of the three modes of nature it is very difficult to know You. As the sun is covered by clouds, which are created by the sun, similarly, Your glory is covered by Your own energy which is created by You (*ātma dyota*)."

|| 10.10.34-35 ||

yasyāvatārā jñāyante śarīreṣv aśarīriṇaḥ

tais tair atulyātiśayair vīryair dehiṣv asaṅgataiḥ

sa bhavān sarva-lokasya bhavāya vibhavāya ca

avatīrṇo 'ṁśa-bhāgena sāmpratamṁ patir āśiṣām

TRANSLATION

Appearing in bodies like those of an ordinary fish, tortoise and hog, You exhibit activities impossible for such creatures to perform—extraordinary, incomparable, transcendental activities of unlimited power and strength. These bodies of Yours, therefore, are not made of material elements, but are incarnations of Your Supreme Personality. You are the same Supreme Personality of Godhead, who have now appeared, with full potency, for the benefit of all living entities within this material world.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa replies to the two demigods, "Yes, I am the Supreme Lord, but by what characteristics do you discern Me as the supreme?" Their answer is given in this verse. Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva continue, "Though You have no material body, You can be known through the remarkable exploits (*vīryaiḥ*) You exhibit in various forms like a fish and turtle. You (*sa bhavan*) are the *avatāri*, the source of all *avatāras*, because while playing as a baby with just a small drop of Your strength You uprooted two trees as strong as Arjuna, which a thousand hands could not uproot. You also gave supernatural strength to the rope and the mortar. You, the fulfiller of all desires (*āśiṣām patiḥ*), have appeared with all Your potencies and different parts and parcels (*aṁśa bhagena*) such as Śiva and Brahmā for the elevation and liberation (*bhavāya vibhavāya*) of everyone."

|| 10.10.36 ||

namaḥ parama-kalyāṇa namaḥ parama-maṅgala

vāsudevāya śāntāya yadūnāṁ pataye namaḥ

TRANSLATION

O supremely auspicious, we offer our respectful obeisances unto You, who are the supreme good. O most famous descendant and controller of the Yadu dynasty, O son of Vasudeva, O most peaceful, let us offer our obeisances unto Your lotus feet.

COMMENTARY

“We offer our respectful obeisances unto You, who give the supreme auspiciousness (*parama kalyāṇa*) of *prema-bhakti* to the living entities. Actually everything You do brings the topmost good to all (*parama maṅgala*).”

|| 10.10.37 ||

anujānīhi nau bhūmaṁs tavānucara-kiṅkarau

darśanaṁ nau bhagavata ṛṣer āsīd anugrahāt

TRANSLATION

O supreme form, we are always servants of Your servants, especially of Nārada Muni. Now give us permission to leave for our home. It is by the grace and mercy of Nārada Muni that we have been able to see You face to face.

COMMENTARY

“We are Your followers (*anucara*) and the servants (*kiṅkarau*) of Your most confidential devotee Nārada.”

|| 10.10.38 ||

vāṇī guṇānukathane śravaṇau kathāyāṁ

hastau ca karmasu manas tava pādayor naḥ

smṛtyāṁ śiras tava nivāsa-jagat-praṇāme

dṛṣṭiḥ satāṁ darśane ’stu bhavat-tanūnām

TRANSLATION

Henceforward, may all our words describe Your pastimes, may our ears engage in aural reception of Your glories, may our hands, legs and other senses engage in actions pleasing to You, and may our minds always think of Your lotus feet. May our heads offer our obeisances to everything within this world, because all things are also Your different forms, and may our eyes see the forms of Vaiṣṇavas, who are nondifferent from You.

COMMENTARY

“Since we are Your followers and Nārada’s servants, You should be very merciful to us. We now pray for something rarely given to others. May our words (*vānī*) always be engaged in describing Your qualities (*guna kathane*) and nothing else. May our minds

always remember Your beautiful lotus feet. May our heads pay respects to everything within this world and especially to devotees such as Nārada."

Taking the phrase *nivāsa jagat* as vocative, it can mean "O abode of the universe (*jagat nivāsa*), may our eyes be engaged in seeing Your forms (*bhavat tanūmān*) and those of your devotees (*satam*) such as Nārada."

|| 10.10.39 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

itthaṁ saṅkīrtitas tābhyāṁ bhagavān gokuleśvaraḥ

dāmnā colūkhale baddhaḥ prahasann āha guhyakau

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: The two young demigods thus offered prayers to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Although Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Godhead, is the master of all and was certainly Gokuleśvara, the master of Gokula, He was bound to the wooden mortar by the ropes of the gopīs, and therefore, smiling widely, He spoke to the sons of Kuvera the following words.

COMMENTARY

Saṅkīrtitah means completely glorified. *Dāmnā ca* hints at being bound not only by ropes but by *prema* too. *Prahasan* means that Kṛṣṇa smiled very sweetly, while thinking that these two minor demigods had become bound up by His *māyā*.

Kṛṣṇa thought, "They are praising Me for freeing them from bondage. But mother Yaśodā binds Me up and scolds Me instead of praising Me. Still out of love I stay in Gokula. The chastisements of the Vrajavāsīs please Me much more than the praises I am receiving from these sons of Kuvera."

|| 10.10.40 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

jñātaṁ mama puraivaitad ṛṣiṇā karuṇātmanā

yac chrī-madāndhayor vāgbhir vibhraṁśo 'nugrahaḥ kṛtaḥ

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: The great saint Nārada Muni is very merciful. By his curse, he showed the greatest favor to both of you, who were mad after material opulence and who had thus become blind. Although you fell from the higher planet Svargaloka and became trees, you were most favored by him. I knew of all these incidents from the very beginning.

COMMENTARY

Nārada gave mercy to Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva by destroying their opulence through his instructions starting with verse eight.

|| 10.10.41 ||

sādhūnāṁ sama-cittānāṁ sutarāṁ mat-kṛtātmanām

darśanān no bhaved bandhaḥ puṁso 'kṣṇoḥ savitur yathā

TRANSLATION

When one is face to face with the sun, there is no longer darkness for one's eyes. Similarly, when one is face to face with a sādhu, a devotee, who is fully determined and surrendered to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, one will no longer be subject to material bondage.

COMMENTARY

How is it possible that Nārada bestowed mercy upon these two rogues? This verse answers the question. "One is released from material bondage by seeing those whose minds are not disturbed by respect or disrespect (*sama cittānām*), and those who have offered their minds completely to Me (*sutarāṁ matkrt ātmanām*)."

Instead of *darśanān no*, there is another reading: *darśan antah*. In that case it means that one's bondage will continue until he sees (*darśana*) a devotee. Just as the sun destroys the darkness just by rising, one's bondage is destroyed immediately upon seeing a pure devotee. However, it should be understood from this example that even though the sun rises, the darkness will not be dissipated if a person is blind. Similarly, if one commits *nāma-aparādha*, as in the case of the demons, he will not be released from bondage even if he sees Nārada Muni.

|| 10.10.42 ||

tad gacchataṁ mat-paramau nalakūvara sādanam

saṅjāto mayi bhāvo vām īpsitaḥ paramo 'bhavaḥ

TRANSLATION

O Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva, now you may both return home. Since you desire to be always absorbed in My devotional service, your desire to develop love and affection for Me will be fulfilled, and now you will never fall from that platform.

COMMENTARY

Though two brothers were present, Kṛṣṇa spoke to the chief one: "O Nalakūvara! You may now return to your home. But since you desire to serve Me, your domestic life will no longer entangle you in *māyā*."

|| 10.10.43 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

ity uktau tau parikramya praṇamya ca punaḥ punaḥ

baddholūkhalam āmantrya jagmatur diśam uttarām

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: The Supreme Personality of Godhead having spoken to the two demigods in this way, they circumambulated the Lord, who was bound to the wooden mortar, and offered obeisances to Him. After taking the permission of Lord Kṛṣṇa, they returned to their respective homes.

COMMENTARY

Baddholūkhalam: He who is bound to the mortar.

Thus ends the commentary on the Tenth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Eleven

The Childhood Pastimes of Kṛṣṇa

|| 10.11.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

gopā nandādayaḥ śrutvā drumayoḥ patato ravam

tatrājagmuḥ kuru-śreṣṭha nirghāta-bhaya-śaṅkitāḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: O Mahārāja Parīkṣit, when the yamala-arjuna trees fell, all the cowherd men in the neighborhood, hearing the fierce sound and fearing thunderbolts, went to the spot.

COMMENTARY

This chapter describes releasing Kṛṣṇa from the mortar, buying fruits, entering Vṛndāvana, herding the cows in the forest, and killing Vatsāsura and Bakāsura.

|| 10.11.2 ||

bhūmyāṁ nipatitau tatra dadṛśur yamalārjunau

babhramus tad avijñāya lakṣyaṁ patana-kāraṇam

TRANSLATION

There they saw the fallen yamala-arjuna trees on the ground, but they were bewildered because even though they could directly perceive that the trees had fallen, they could not trace out the cause for their having done so.

|| 10.11.3 ||

ulūkhalaṁ vikarṣantaṁ dāmnā baddhaṁ ca bālakam

kasyedaṁ kuta āścaryam utpāta iti kātarāḥ

TRANSLATION

Kṛṣṇa was bound by the rope to the ulūkhala, the mortar, which He was dragging. But how could He have pulled down the trees? Who had actually done it? Where was the source for this incident? Considering all these astounding things, the cowherd men were doubtful and bewildered.

COMMENTARY

The cowherd men of Vraja understood that Kṛṣṇa had caused the *yamala-arjuna* trees to fall, but because of *prema* they could not think that it was so. They doubted that such a small boy could do such a thing. They express their doubt in these verses. “Who has done this? Why has this amazing accident happened to this boy? It is our good fortune that Lord Nārāyaṇa has protected Him.” Thinking in this way, the cowherd men were filled with anxiety.

|| 10.11.4 ||

bālā ūcur aneneti tiryag-gatam ulūkhalam

vikarṣatā madhya-gena puruṣāv apy acakṣmahi

TRANSLATION

Then all the cowherd boys said: It is Kṛṣṇa who has done this. When He was in between the two trees, the mortar fell crosswise. Kṛṣṇa dragged the mortar, and the two trees fell down. After that, two beautiful men came out of the trees. We have seen this with our own eyes.

COMMENTARY

The cowherd boys said: “Kṛṣṇa went between the trees and the mortar fell crosswise.” The elders did not believe their story, so the boys repeated, “We saw two men emerge from the trees.”

|| 10.11.5 ||

na te tad-uktaṁ jagṛhur na ghaṭeteti tasya tat

bālasyotpāṭanaṁ tarvoḥ kecit sandigdha-cetasaḥ

TRANSLATION

Because of intense paternal affection, the cowherd men, headed by Nanda, could not believe that Kṛṣṇa could have uprooted the trees in such a wonderful way. Therefore they could not put their faith in the words of the boys. Some of the men, however, were in doubt. “Since Kṛṣṇa was predicted to equal Nārāyaṇa,” they thought, “it might be that He could have done it.”

COMMENTARY

Nanda and the cowherd men did not believe the children because their feelings for Kṛṣṇa would not allow them to think that Kṛṣṇa was omnipotent. Some of the men however remembered Gargamuni’s prediction about Kṛṣṇa being equal to Nārāyaṇa. Though full of affection for Kṛṣṇa, they became uncertain and thought, “May be He did it.”

|| 10.11.6 ||

ulūkhalaṁ vikarṣantaṁ dāmnā baddhaṁ svam ātmajam

vilokya nandaḥ prahasad-vadano vimumoca ha

TRANSLATION

When Nanda Mahārāja saw his own son bound with ropes to the wooden mortar and dragging it, he smiled and released Kṛṣṇa from His bonds.

COMMENTARY

Glancing repeatedly over all of Kṛṣṇa’s limbs, Nanda Mahārāja smiled as he thought, “Your mother, whose lap You prefer to mine, has bound You up because of some small offense. Therefore, how can I release You? As You bind the living entities with illusion, You bind your mother and father with *prema*.”

|| 10.11.7 ||

gopībhiḥ stobhito 'nṛtyad bhagavān bālavat kvacit

udgāyati kvacin mugdhas tad-vaśo dāru-yantravat

TRANSLATION

The gopīs would say, "If You dance, my dear Kṛṣṇa, then I shall give You half a sweetmeat." By saying these words or by clapping their hands, all the gopīs encouraged Kṛṣṇa in different ways. At such times, although He was the supremely powerful Personality of Godhead, He would smile and dance according to their desire, as if He were a wooden doll in their hands. Sometimes He would sing very loudly, at their bidding. In this way, Kṛṣṇa came completely under the control of the gopīs.

COMMENTARY

Who can describe the good fortune of Kṛṣṇa's father and mother? Though Kṛṣṇa is the controller of Brahmā, Śiva and millions of demigods, He is controlled at every step by the inhabitants of Vraja. This is described in three and a half verses. The *gopīs* would say, "If You dance, my dear Kṛṣṇa, I will give you a sweet!" Induced (*stobhitah*) by the *gopīs*, Kṛṣṇa sometimes danced just like a human child (*bālavat*). Overwhelmed (*mugdhas*) by the *gopīs*' sweet love, Kṛṣṇa would conceal His omnipotence and smile and dance just like a wooden doll in their hands.

|| 10.11.8 ||

bibharti kvacid ājñaptaḥ pīṭhakonmāna-pādukam

bāhu-kṣepaṁ ca kurute svānāṁ ca prītim āvahan

TRANSLATION

Sometimes mother Yaśodā and her gopī friends would tell Kṛṣṇa, "Bring this article" or "Bring that article." Sometimes they would order Him to bring a wooden plank, wooden shoes or a wooden measuring pot, and Kṛṣṇa, when thus ordered by the mothers, would try to bring them. Sometimes, however, as if unable to raise these things, He would touch them and stand there. Just to invite the pleasure of His relatives, He would strike His body with His arms to show that He had sufficient strength.

COMMENTARY

In order to test Kṛṣṇa's strength, the *gopīs* would ask Him to bring wooden shoes, and then progressively heavier objects. Ordered (*ājñapta*) by the *gopīs*, Kṛṣṇa would stand up holding the objects over His soft belly. To invite the pleasure of His relatives (*svānāṁ*), Kṛṣṇa would sometimes slap His arms to show that He had sufficient strength.

|| 10.11.9 ||

darśayaṁs tad-vidāṁ loka ātmano bhṛtya-vaśyatām

vrajasyovāha vai harṣaṁ bhagavān bāla-ceṣṭitaiḥ

TRANSLATION

To pure devotees throughout the world who could understand His activities, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, exhibited how much He can be subdued by His devotees, His servants. In this way He increased the pleasure of the Vrajavāsis by His childhood activities.

COMMENTARY

Not only Kṛṣṇa's relatives, but all the Vrajavāsīs enjoyed unlimited bliss from His childhood pastimes, wherein He allowed Himself to come under their control. Kṛṣṇa showed this aspect of Himself being controlled by His devotees' love directly to those external devotees like Brahmā and Śiva who were captivated by Kṛṣṇa's potency of majestic opulence because it cannot be understood merely by explanations.

|| 10.11.10 ||

krīṇīhi bhoḥ phalānīti śrutvā satvaram acyutaḥ

phalārthī dhānyam ādāya yayau sarva-phala-pradaḥ

TRANSLATION

Once a woman selling fruit was calling, "O inhabitants of Vrajabhūmi, if you want to purchase some fruits, come here!" Upon hearing this, Kṛṣṇa immediately took some grains and went to barter as if He needed some fruits.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa bestowed bliss upon all the residents of Vṛndāvana, including the Pulindas who were aborigines or the lowest class among the Vrajavāsīs. Acyuta is full in every respect and He Himself provides fruits for everyone. Yet desiring some fruits, He quickly went out with a handful of grains, as only that was available at the moment.

|| 10.11.11 ||

phala-vikrayiṇī tasya cyuta-dhānya-kara-dvayam

phalair apūrayad ratnaiḥ phala-bhāṇḍam apūri ca

TRANSLATION

While Kṛṣṇa was going to the fruit vendor very hastily, most of the grains He was holding fell. Nonetheless, the fruit vendor filled Kṛṣṇa's hands with fruits, and her fruit basket was immediately filled with jewels and gold.

COMMENTARY

The fruit seller did not even get a full handful of grains because the grains fell on the path as Kṛṣṇa hastily approached her. Kṛṣṇa exchanged the few grains remaining in His hand for some fruits while saying, "Give Me some fruit." The Pulinda woman selling fruits became overcome with affection, and filled Kṛṣṇa's hands with *pīlu* and other fruits. Being greedy for the fruits. Kṛṣṇa somehow managed to hold them all in His small hands by the influence of His *aiśvarya-śakti*. In return, the Pulinda woman received all types of wealth including the treasure of *Kṛṣṇa-prema* from Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who possesses the power to bestow all fruits.

|| 10.11.12 ||

sarit-tīra-gataṁ kṛṣṇaṁ bhagnārjunam athāhvayat

rāmaṁ ca rohiṇī devī krīḍantaṁ bālakair bhṛśam

TRANSLATION

Once, after the uprooting of the yamala-arjuna trees, Rohiṇīdevī went to call Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, who had both gone to the riverside and were playing with the other boys with deep attention.

COMMENTARY

To show how Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were controlled more by Yaśodā's affection than by Rohiṇī's, Śukadeva tells another pastime which occurred on the same day after the breaking of the *yamala-arjuna* trees. Rohiṇī called Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, who had both gone to play on the bank of the Yamunā. Yaśodā sent Rohiṇī to call the boys because she wanted Them to take lunch.

|| 10.11.13 ||

nopeyātāṁ yadāhūtau krīḍā-saṅgena putrakau

yaśodāṁ preṣayām āsa rohiṇī putra-vatsalām

TRANSLATION

Because of being too attached to playing with the other boys, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma did not return upon being called by Rohiṇī. Therefore Rohiṇī sent mother Yaśodā to call Them back, because mother Yaśodā was more affectionate to Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma.

COMMENTARY

When Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma did not respond to her call, Rohiṇī sent Yaśodā because she knew that Yaśodā had more affection for the two boys and therefore could attract Them.

|| 10.11.14 ||

krīḍantaṁ sā sutaṁ bālair ativelaṁ sahāgrajam

yaśodājohavīt kṛṣṇaṁ putra-sneha-snuta-stanī

TRANSLATION

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, being attached to Their play, were playing with the other boys although it was very late. Therefore mother Yaśodā called Them back for lunch. Because of her ecstatic love and affection for Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, milk flowed from her breasts.

COMMENTARY

Yaśodā called Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma again and again (*ajohavīt*). She called the boys from a distance because she feared that They would run away if she came close.

|| 10.11.15 ||

kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇāravindākṣa tāta ehi stanaṁ piba

alaṁ vihāraiḥ kṣut-kṣāntaḥ krīḍā-śrānto 'si putraka

TRANSLATION

Mother Yaśodā said: My dear son Kṛṣṇa, lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa, come here and drink the milk of my breast. My dear darling, You must be very tired because of hunger and the fatigue of playing so long. There is no need to play any more.

COMMENTARY

Yaśodā repeated Kṛṣṇa's name several times from far off so that He would hear.

|| 10.11.16 ||

he rāmāgaccha tātāśu sānujaḥ kula-nandana

prātar eva kṛtāhāras tad bhavān bhoktum arhati

TRANSLATION

My dear Baladeva, best of our family, please come immediately with Your younger brother, Kṛṣṇa. You both ate in the morning, and now You ought to eat something more.

|| 10.11.17 ||

pratīkṣate tvāṁ dāśārha bhokṣyamāṇo vrajādhipaḥ

ehy āvayoḥ priyaṁ dhehi sva-gṛhān yāta bālakāḥ

TRANSLATION

Nanda Mahārāja, the King of Vraja, is now waiting to eat. O my dear son Balarāma, he is waiting for You. Therefore, come back to please us. All the boys playing with You and Kṛṣṇa should now go to their homes.

COMMENTARY

"Your father is sitting but he will not eat (*bhokṣyamān*) without You. Why are You giving hunger pangs to Your father? All the boys playing with You should now go to their homes. Your parents are also in difficulty like us, so please go and satisfy them." Yaśodā said these things to stop the boys from playing.

|| 10.11.18 ||

dhūli-dhūsaritāṅgas tvaṁ putra maj̱janam āvaha

janmarkṣaṁ te ’dya bhavati viprebhyo dehi gāḥ śuciḥ

TRANSLATION

Mother Yaśodā further told Kṛṣṇa: My dear son, because of playing all day, Your body has become covered with dust and sand. Therefore, come back, take Your bath and cleanse Yourself. Today the moon is conjoined with the auspicious star of Your birth. Therefore, be pure and give cows in charity to the brāhmaṇas.

COMMENTARY

But Kṛṣṇa still did not come. Then Yaśodā tried to kindle His interest in giving charity.

|| 10.11.19 ||

paśya paśya vayasyāṁs te mātṛ-mṛṣṭān svalaṅkṛtān

tvaṁ ca snātaḥ kṛtāhāro viharasva svalaṅkṛtaḥ

TRANSLATION

Just see how all Your playmates of Your own age have been cleansed and decorated with beautiful ornaments by their mothers. You should come here, and after You have taken Your bath, eaten Your lunch and been decorated with ornaments, You may play with Your friends again.

COMMENTARY

When Kṛṣṇa still refused to come, Yaśodā tried to awaken His competitive spirit. She pointed out how His playmates were beautifully decorated by their mothers.

|| 10.11.20 ||

itthaṁ yaśodā tam aśeṣa-śekharaṁ

matvā sutaṁ sneha-nibaddha-dhīr nṛpa

haste gṛhītvā saha-rāmam acyutaṁ

nītvā sva-vāṭaṁ kṛtavaty athodayam

TRANSLATION

My dear Mahārāja Parīkṣit, because of intense love and affection, mother Yaśodā, Kṛṣṇa's mother, considered Kṛṣṇa, who was at the peak of all opulences, to be her own son. Thus she took Kṛṣṇa by the hand, along with Balarāma, and brought Them home, where she performed her duties by fully bathing Them, dressing Them and feeding Them.

COMMENTARY

Yaśodā thought that Ananta, the crest jewel and source of all *avatāras*, was her son. Another meaning: Yaśodā considered that Kṛṣṇa was not Bhagavān (*a-śeṣaśekharaṁ*). Actually Kṛṣṇa was both. Another meaning could be: Yaśodā thought of her son as the crest jewel of Her entire (*asesa*) family. Yaśodā took Kṛṣṇa home (*sva vāṭam*) and bathed, dressed and fed Him sumptuously.

|| 10.11.21 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

gopa-vṛddhā mahotpātān anubhūya bṛhadvane

nandādayaḥ samāgamya vraja-kāryam amantrayan

TRANSLATION

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: Then one time, having seen the great disturbances in Bṛhadvana, all the elderly persons among the cowherd men, headed by Nanda Mahārāja, assembled and began to consider what to do to stop the continuous disturbing situations in Vraja.

COMMENTARY

To fulfill His desire to now play in Vṛndāvana, Kṛṣṇa inspired Upananda from within the heart to suggest that everyone move from Mahāvana (Bṛhadvana) to Vṛndāvana.

|| 10.11.22 ||

tatropānanda-nāmāha gopo jñāna-vayo-'dhikaḥ

deśa-kālārtha-tattva-jñaḥ priya-kṛd rāma-kṛṣṇayoḥ

TRANSLATION

At this meeting of all the inhabitants of Gokula, a cowherd man named Upananda, who was the most mature in age and knowledge and was very experienced according to time, circumstances and country, made this suggestion for the benefit of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

Upananda was not only Nanda Mahārāja's elder brother, but he was also a most learned and experienced counselor.

|| 10.11.23 ||

utthātavyam ito 'smābhir gokulasya hitaiṣibhiḥ

āyānty atra mahotpātā bālānāṁ nāśa-hetavaḥ

TRANSLATION

He said: My dear friends the cowherd men, in order to do good to this place, Gokula, we should leave it, because so many disturbances are always occurring here, just for the purpose of killing Rāma and Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

Upananda said, "Thinking of the welfare of all the inhabitants of Vraja (*gokulasya hitaiṣibhiḥ*), we should move to safer place."

|| 10.11.24 ||

muktaḥ kathañcid rākṣasyā bāla-ghnyā bālako hy asau

harer anugrahān nūnam anaś copari nāpatat

TRANSLATION

The child Kṛṣṇa, simply by the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, was somehow or other rescued from the hands of the Rākṣasī Pūtanā, who was determined to kill Him. Then, again by the mercy of the Supreme Godhead, the handcart missed falling upon the child.

|| 10.11.25 ||

cakra-vātena nīto 'yaṁ daityena vipadaṁ viyat

śilāyāṁ patitas tatra paritrātaḥ sureśvaraiḥ

TRANSLATION

Then again, the demon Tṛṇāvarta, in the form of a whirlwind, took the child away into the dangerous sky to kill Him, but the demon fell down onto a slab of stone. In that case also, by the mercy of Lord Viṣṇu or His associates, the child was saved.

COMMENTARY

"Kṛṣṇa was once taken in the sky (*viyat*) by Tṛṇāvarta (*cakravatena*) and nearly killed (*vipadaṁ*). Fortunately He was saved by Viṣṇu (*sureśvaraiḥ*)." The word *sureśvaraiḥ* is spoken in the plural form to show respect. The word *api* mentioned in the following verse should be understood in this verse also. "Though (*api*) Kṛṣṇa was taken in the sky and dropped on a rock, He was saved by Viṣṇu."

|| 10.11.26 ||

yan na mriyeta drumayor antaraṁ prāpya bālakaḥ

asāv anyatamo vāpi tad apy acyuta-rakṣaṇam

TRANSLATION

Even the other day, neither Kṛṣṇa nor any of His playmates died from the falling of the two trees, although the children were near the trees or even between them. This also is to be considered the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

COMMENTARY

Asau refers to Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.11.27 ||

yāvad autpātiko 'riṣṭo vrajaṁ nābhibhaved itaḥ

tāvad bālān upādāya yāsyāmo 'nyatra sānugāḥ

TRANSLATION

All these incidents are being caused by some unknown demon. Before he comes here to create another disturbance, it is our duty to go somewhere else with the boys until there are no more disturbances.

COMMENTARY

Upananda continued, “Previously there was so much *kīrtana*, worship and *darśana* of Viṣṇu in this village. Everywhere and at every moment since the birth of Nandananda there has only been *kīrtana* and *darśana* of Viṣṇu. Now let us go somewhere where we can worship Viṣṇu, who has always protected us, without being disturbed. We should follow the *Nīti-śāstra* given by Viṣṇu.”

|| 10.11.28 ||

vanaṁ vṛndāvanaṁ nāma paśavyaṁ nava-kānanam

gopa-gopī-gavāṁ sevyaṁ puṇyādri-tṛṇa-vīrudham

TRANSLATION

Between Nandeśvara and Mahāvana is a place named Vṛndāvana. This place is very suitable because it is lush with grass, plants and creepers for the cows and other animals. It has nice gardens and tall mountains and is full of facilities for the happiness of all the gopas and gopīs and our animals.

COMMENTARY

“We cannot return to our old capital in Nandīśvara because we left there out of fear of Ariṣṭāsura and came to Mahāvana. Ariṣṭāsura is still there. Between Mahāvana and Nandīśvara is a forest named Vṛndāvana. This place is very suitable for living and beneficial for the cows (*paśavyam*) because it filled with lush foliage and fresh gardens.” Considering like this, Upananda spoke this verse.

|| 10.11.29 ||

tat tatrādyaiva yāsyāmaḥ śakaṭān yuṅkta mā ciram

godhanāny agrato yāntu bhavatāṁ yadi rocate

TRANSLATION

Therefore, let us immediately go today. There is no need to wait any further. If you agree to my proposal, let us prepare all the bullock carts and put the cows in front of us, and let us go there.

COMMENTARY

"Therefore (*tat*), if it pleases all of you (*bhavatāṁ*), we should immediately go to Vṛndāvana (*tatra*)."

|| 10.11.30 ||

tac chrutvaika-dhiyo gopāḥ sādhu sādhv iti vādinaḥ

vrajān svān svān samāyujya yayū rūḍha-paricchadāḥ

TRANSLATION

Upon hearing this advice from Upānanda, the cowherd men unanimously agreed. "Very nice," they said, "Very nice." Thus they sorted out their household affairs, placed their clothing and other paraphernalia on the carts, and immediately started for Vṛndāvana.

COMMENTARY

The Vrajavāsīs started for Vṛndāvana after collecting (*samyujan*) all the cows and other animals, and loading their household goods on carts (*rūḍha paricchadāḥ*).

|| 10.11.31-32 ||

vṛddhān bālān striyo rājan sarvopakaraṇāni ca

anaḥsv āropya gopālā yattā ātta-śarāsanāḥ

godhanāni puraskṛtya śṛṅgāṇy āpūrya sarvataḥ

tūrya-ghoṣeṇa mahatā yayuḥ saha-purohitāḥ

TRANSLATION

Keeping all the old men, women, children and household paraphernalia on the bullock carts and keeping all the cows in front, the cowherd men picked up their bows and arrows with great care and sounded bugles made of horn. O King

Parīkṣit, in this way, with bugles vibrating all around, the cowherd men, accompanied by their priests, began their journey.

COMMENTARY

Yatta means carefully.

|| 10.11.33 ||

gopyo rūḍha-rathā nūtna-kuca-kuṅkuma-kāntayaḥ

kṛṣṇa-līlā jaguḥ prītyā niṣka-kaṇṭhyaḥ suvāsasaḥ

TRANSLATION

The cowherd women, riding on the bullock carts, were dressed very nicely with excellent garments, and their bodies, especially their breasts, were decorated with fresh kuṅkuma powder. As they rode, they began to chant with great pleasure the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.11.34 ||

tathā yaśodā-rohiṇyāv ekaṁ śakaṭam āsthite

rejatuḥ kṛṣṇa-rāmābhyāṁ tat-kathā-śravaṇotsuke

TRANSLATION

Thus hearing about the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma with great pleasure, mother Yaśodā and Rohiṇīdevī, so as not to be separated from Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma for even a moment, got up with Them on one bullock cart. In this situation, they all looked very beautiful.

COMMENTARY

Yaśodā and Rohiṇī held their sons and sat on one cart because Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma could not bear to be separated from each other.

|| 10.11.35 ||

vṛndāvanaṁ sampraviśya sarva-kāla-sukhāvaham

tatra cakrur vrajāvāsaṁ śakaṭair ardha-candravat

TRANSLATION

In this way they entered Vṛndāvana, where it is always pleasing to live in all seasons. They made a temporary place to inhabit by placing their bullock carts around them in the shape of a half moon.

COMMENTARY

They formed a half circle with their bullock carts and stored all their household goods behind the carts. The front area was left open so the cows could easily come and go. This is described in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*: There was no need to make fences around their temporary residence. The inhabitants were encircled by bullock carts, animals and thorn trees.

|| 10.11.36 ||

vṛndāvanaṁ govardhanaṁ yamunā-pulināni ca

vīkṣyāsīd uttamā prītī rāma-mādhavayor nṛpa

TRANSLATION

O King Parīkṣit, when Rāma and Kṛṣṇa saw Vṛndāvana, Govardhana and the banks of the River Yamunā, They both enjoyed great pleasure.

|| 10.11.37 ||

evaṁ vrajaukasāṁ prītiṁ yacchantau bāla-ceṣṭitaiḥ

kala-vākyaiḥ sva-kālena vatsa-pālau babhūvatuḥ

TRANSLATION

In this way, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, acting like small boys and talking in half-broken language, gave transcendental pleasure to all the inhabitants of Vraja. In due course of time, They became old enough to take care of the calves.

COMMENTARY

At the suitable time (*sva kālena*), three years old, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma started taking care of the calves.

|| 10.11.38 ||

avidūre vraja-bhuvaḥ saha gopāla-dārakaiḥ

cārayām āsatur vatsān nānā-krīḍā-paricchadau

TRANSLATION

Not far away from Their residential quarters, both Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, equipped with all kinds of playthings, played with other cowherd boys and began to tend the small calves.

|| 10.11.39-40 ||

kvacid vādayato veṇuṁ kṣepaṇaiḥ kṣipataḥ kvacit

kvacit pādaiḥ kiṅkiṇībhiḥ kvacit kṛtrima-go-vṛṣaiḥ

vṛṣāyamāṇau nardantau yuyudhāte parasparam

anukṛtya rutair jantūṁś ceratuḥ prākṛtau yathā

TRANSLATION

Sometimes Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma would play on Their flutes, sometimes They would throw ropes and stones devised for getting fruits from the trees, sometimes They would throw only stones, and sometimes, Their ankle bells tinkling, They would play football with fruits like bael and āmalakī. Sometimes They would cover Themselves with blankets and imitate cows and bulls and fight with one another, roaring loudly, and sometimes They would imitate the voices of the animals. In this way They enjoyed sporting, exactly like two ordinary human children.

COMMENTARY

Sometimes using slings (*kṣepaṇa yatraih*), Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma would throw (*kṣipatam*) *āmalakī* and *bel* fruits far away. Sometimes they would kick each other with Their

bangled feet. Covering themselves with blankets, They pretended to be bulls and roared while fighting each other. They would also imitate the voices of swans and peacocks.

|| 10.11.41 ||

kadācid yamunā-tīre vatsāṁś cārayatoḥ svakaiḥ

vayasyaiḥ kṛṣṇa-balayor jighāṁsur daitya āgamat

TRANSLATION

One day while Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, along with Their playmates, were tending the calves on the bank of the River Yamunā, another demon arrived there, desiring to kill Them.

|| 10.11.42 ||

taṁ vatsa-rūpiṇaṁ vīkṣya vatsa-yūtha-gataṁ hariḥ

darśayan baladevāya śanair mugdha ivāsadat

TRANSLATION

When the Supreme Personality of Godhead saw that the demon had assumed the form of a calf and entered among the groups of other calves, He pointed out to Baladeva, "Here is another demon." Then He very slowly approached the demon, as if He did not understand the demon's intentions.

COMMENTARY

With a sidelong glance Kṛṣṇa informed Balarāma, and then pretending that He did not know (*mugdha iva*), Kṛṣṇa approached (*asadat*) the demon.

|| 10.11.43 ||

gṛhītvāpara-pādābhyāṁ saha-lāṅgūlam acyutaḥ

bhrāmayitvā kapitthāgre prāhiṇod gata-jīvitam

sa kapitthair mahā-kāyaḥ pātyamānaiḥ papāta ha

TRANSLATION

Thereafter, Śrī Kṛṣṇa caught the demon by the hind legs and tail, twirled the demon's whole body very strongly until the demon was dead, and threw him into the top of a kapittha tree, which then fell down, along with the body of the demon, who had assumed a great form.

COMMENTARY

Acyutaḥ, the Lord who never falls, grasped the hind legs and tail of Vatsāsura, and threw the demon into the top of a *kapittha* tree to arrange for his fall (*cyuta*) or death from the material world. By throwing the demon in the tree Kṛṣṇa caused the *kapittha* fruits to fall for the satisfaction of His friends. Kṛṣṇa whirled the demon around very severely until he was dead (*gata jīvitam*), and then threw him in the tree (*prāhiṇot*).

|| 10.11.44 ||

taṁ vīkṣya vismitā bālāḥ śaśaṁsuḥ sādhu sādhv iti

devāś ca parisantuṣṭā babhūvuḥ puṣpa-varṣiṇaḥ

TRANSLATION

Upon seeing the dead body of the demon, all the cowherd boys exclaimed, "Well done, Kṛṣṇa! Very good, very good! Thank You." In the upper planetary system, all the demigods were pleased, and therefore they showered flowers on the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

|| 10.11.45 ||

tau vatsa-pālakau bhūtvā sarva-lokaika-pālakau

saprātar-āśau go-vatsāṁś cārayantau viceratuḥ

TRANSLATION

After the killing of the demon, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma finished Their breakfast in the morning, and while continuing to take care of the calves, They wandered here and there. Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, the Supreme Personalities of Godhead, who maintain the entire creation, now took charge of the calves as if cowherd boys.

COMMENTARY

On that day, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, who maintain all living beings throughout the whole universe (*eka palikau*), became the protectors of the calves (*vatsa-pālakau*). After taking Their morning breakfast (*prātar asau*), Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma played while tending the calves.

|| 10.11.46 ||

svaṁ svaṁ vatsa-kulaṁ sarve pāyayiṣyanta ekadā

gatvā jalāśayābhyāśaṁ pāyayitvā papur jalam

TRANSLATION

One day all the boys, including Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, each boy taking his own group of calves, brought the calves to a reservoir of water, desiring to allow them to drink. After the animals drank water, the boys drank water there also.

|| 10.11.47 ||

te tatra dadṛśur bālā mahā-sattvam avasthitam

tatrasur vajra-nirbhinnaṁ gireḥ śṛṅgam iva cyutam

TRANSLATION

Right by the reservoir, the boys saw a gigantic body resembling a mountain peak broken and struck down by a thunderbolt. They were afraid even to see such a huge living being.

COMMENTARY

The demon looked like a mountain peak cut off by a thunderbolt.

|| 10.11.48 ||

sa vai bako nāma mahān asuro baka-rūpa-dhṛk

āgatya sahasā kṛṣṇaṁ tīkṣṇa-tuṇḍo ’grāsad balī

TRANSLATION

That great-bodied demon was named Bakāsura. He had assumed the body of a duck with a very sharp beak. Having come there, he immediately swallowed Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.11.49 ||

kṛṣṇaṁ mahā-baka-grastaṁ dṛṣṭvā rāmādayo 'rbhakāḥ

babhūvur indriyāṇīva vinā prāṇaṁ vicetasaḥ

TRANSLATION

When Balarāma and the other boys saw that Kṛṣṇa had been devoured by the gigantic duck, they became almost unconscious, like senses without life.

COMMENTARY

Seeing that the gigantic duck had swallowed Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma and the other cowherd boys became unconscious. Though Balarāma could have easily killed the demon, He responded by fainting due to the intensity of brotherly affection. A similar thing happened during the *rukmiṇī-haraṇa līlā*, the kidnapping of Rukmiṇī, wherein Balarāma displayed His brotherly affection by protecting Kṛṣṇa from the attack of Jarāsandha and other soldiers.

|| 10.11.50 ||

taṁ tālu-mūlaṁ pradahantam agnivad gopāla-sūnuṁ pitaraṁ jagad-guroḥ

caccharda sadyo 'tiruṣākṣataṁ bakas tuṇḍena hantuṁ punar abhyapadyata

TRANSLATION

Kṛṣṇa, who was the father of Lord Brahmā but who was acting as the son of a cowherd man, became like fire, burning the root of the demon's throat, and the demon Bakāsura immediately disgorged Him. When the demon saw that Kṛṣṇa, although having been swallowed, was unharmed, he immediately attacked Kṛṣṇa again with his sharp beak.

COMMENTARY

Just as sugar candy tastes bitter to the tongue of the diseased person, the demon Bakāsura felt that his throat was on fire though Kṛṣṇa is as soft as a tender blue lotus.

This indicates that Kṛṣṇa's body became as hard as a thunderbolt. It was the fault of the demon's throat not Kṛṣṇa. When Bakāsura spit out Kṛṣṇa he saw that Kṛṣṇa was unharmed (*aksata*).

|| 10.11.51 ||

tam āpatantaṁ sa nigṛhya tuṇḍayor

dorbhyāṁ bakaṁ kaṁsa-sakhaṁ satāṁ patiḥ

paśyatsu bāleṣu dadāra līlayā

mudāvaho vīraṇavad divaukasām

TRANSLATION

When Kṛṣṇa, the leader of the Vaiṣṇavas, saw that the demon Bakāsura, the friend of Kaṁsa, was endeavoring to attack Him, with His arms He captured the demon by the two halves of the beak, and in the presence of all the cowherd boys Kṛṣṇa very easily bifurcated Him, as a child splits a blade of vīraṇa grass. By thus killing the demon, Kṛṣṇa very much pleased the denizens of heaven.

COMMENTARY

In the presence of all the cowherd boys, Kṛṣṇa firmly grasped (*nigṛhya*) Bakāsura's beak and bifurcated it like a blade of *virana* grass. This action greatly pleased all the demigods (*mudāvahaḥ*).

|| 10.11.52 ||

tadā bakāriṁ sura-loka-vāsinaḥ samākiran nandana-mallikādibhiḥ

samīḍire cānaka-śaṅkha-saṁstavais tad vīkṣya gopāla-sutā visismire

TRANSLATION

At that time, the celestial denizens of the higher planetary system showered mallikā-puṣpa, flowers grown in Nandana-kānana, upon Kṛṣṇa, the enemy of Bakāsura. They also congratulated Him by sounding celestial kettledrums and conchshells and by offering prayers. Seeing this, the cowherd boys were struck with wonder.

COMMENTARY

The demigods showered flowers (*samākiran*) everywhere, and praised Kṛṣṇa with selected prayers (*saṁstavaih*).

|| 10.11.53 ||

muktaṁ bakāsyād upalabhya bālakā rāmādayaḥ prāṇam ivendriyo gaṇaḥ

sthānāgataṁ taṁ parirabhya nirvṛtāḥ praṇīya vatsān vrajam etya taj jaguḥ

TRANSLATION

Just as the senses are pacified when consciousness and life return, so when Kṛṣṇa was freed from this danger, all the boys, including Balarāma, thought that their life had been restored. They embraced Kṛṣṇa in good consciousness, and then they collected their own calves and returned to Vrajabhūmi, where they declared the incident loudly.

COMMENTARY

Just like enlivened senses, the boys regained their lives (*prāṇam iva*) when Kṛṣṇa returned from the clutches of the demon. Balarāma and the boys embraced Kṛṣṇa, and then collected (*praṇīya*) their calves to return home (*sthānām*). They loudly proclaimed (*jaguḥ*) the killing of Vatsāsura and Bakāsura. A second meaning: The cowherd boys set the descriptions of these pastimes to poetic melody and rhythm so they could sing them on other days.

|| 10.11.54 ||

śrutvā tad vismitā gopā gopyaś cātipriyādṛtāḥ

pretyāgatam ivotsukyād aikṣanta tṛṣitekṣaṇāḥ

TRANSLATION

When the cowherd men and women heard about the killing of Bakāsura in the forest, they were very much astonished. Upon seeing Kṛṣṇa and hearing the story, they received Kṛṣṇa very eagerly, thinking that Kṛṣṇa and the other boys had returned from the mouth of death. Thus they looked upon Kṛṣṇa and the boys with silent eyes, not wanting to turn their eyes aside now that the boys were safe.

COMMENTARY

The *gopas* and *gopīs* were very pleased (*ādṛtāḥ*) to see their most beloved (*atipriyā*) Kṛṣṇa. With eyes thirsting to drink the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's beauty (*tṛṣita iksaṇa*), they glanced at Him (*aikṣantaḥ*), looking over His whole body for fear that He was wounded.

|| 10.11.55 ||

aho batāsya bālasya bahavo mṛtyavo 'bhavan

apy āsīd vipriyaṁ teṣāṁ kṛtaṁ pūrvaṁ yato bhayam

TRANSLATION

The cowherd men, headed by Nanda Mahārāja, began to contemplate: It is very astonishing that although this boy Kṛṣṇa has many times faced many varied causes of death, by the grace of the Supreme Personality of Godhead it was these causes of fear that were killed, instead of Him.

COMMENTARY

Three verses (55-58) describe the amazement of the cowherd men in discussing Kṛṣṇa's exploits: "This boy Kṛṣṇa has faced many causes of death (*mṛtyavaḥ*). But these causes of fear were killed and not our innocent boy."

|| 10.11.56 ||

athāpy abhibhavanty enaṁ naiva te ghora-darśanāḥ

jighāṁsayainam āsādya naśyanty agnau pataṅgavat

TRANSLATION

Although the causes of death, the daityas, were very fierce, they could not kill this boy Kṛṣṇa. Rather, because they came to kill innocent boys, as soon as they approached they themselves were killed, exactly like flies attacking a fire.

COMMENTARY

Nanda Mahārāja innocently thought, "Perhaps this boy Kṛṣṇa formerly killed all these demons, and therefore in this life they are troubling Him?" This verse answers the question. "If that were true, then they would have been able to destroy Kṛṣṇa. But when they tried to kill Kṛṣṇa, they got killed by Him."

|| 10.11.57 ||

aho brahma-vidāṁ vāco nāsatyāḥ santi karhicit

gargo yad āha bhagavān anvabhāvi tathaiva tat

TRANSLATION

The words of persons in full knowledge of Brahman never become untrue. It is very wonderful that whatever Gargamuni predicted we are now actually experiencing in all detail.

COMMENTARY

The reason for the condition mentioned above is now given. Nanda Mahārāja continued, "Gargamuni said that Kṛṣṇa's qualities would be exactly like those of Nārāyaṇa."

|| 10.11.58 ||

iti nandādayo gopāḥ kṛṣṇa-rāma-kathāṁ mudā

kurvanto ramamāṇāś ca nāvindan bhava-vedanām

TRANSLATION

In this way all the cowherd men, headed by Nanda Mahārāja, enjoyed topics about the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma with great transcendental pleasure, and they could not even perceive material tribulations.

COMMENTARY

Nanda Mahārāja and the cowherd men sat in the meeting room, and repeatedly discussed the naughtiness of the boy and His killing of Vatsāsura and Bakāsura. They also composed songs which they sang again and again (*kathāṁ kurvantaḥ*), and thus they did not perceive the tribulations of material existence (*bhavasya vedanām*).

Other elderly cowherd men coming from distant places informed Nanda about need to become liberated from the material world: "Half your life is gone. Why do you remain immersed in discussing about child, family and wife? Why don't you concentrate on knowledge, detachment, austerity and remembrance of Nārāyaṇa so that you get deliverance from the material world?" Though requested in this way, Nanda Mahārāja and the other cowherd men did not pay any attention to that (*na avindan bhavasya vedanam*). To say that this phrase means that "they did not suffer the pains of material life" is not acceptable. The *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.6.40) describes the exalted nature of the cowherd men and women, who were not touched by the material world born of

ignorance. There is no question that they could be affected by the pains of the material world. In this way, whatever appears as material tribulations simply nourishes the pastimes and therefore is called *līlā-māyā*.

Not only did the cowherd men speak about Kṛṣṇa and His past and future pastimes, but they also enjoyed playing with Kṛṣṇa (*ramamāṇāh*). Thus they did not know the sufferings of materialistic persons (*bhava vedanām*), though they were living in the material world. When the Vrajavāsīs say "I am suffering from hunger," that hunger is not related to the material world.

|| 10.11.59 ||

evaṁ vihāraiḥ kaumāraiḥ kaumāraṁ jahatur vraje

nilāyanaiḥ setu-bandhair markaṭotplavanādibhiḥ

TRANSLATION

In this way Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma passed Their childhood age in Vrajabhūmi by engaging in activities of childish play, such as playing hide-and-seek, constructing a make-believe bridge on the ocean, and jumping here and there like monkeys.

Thus ends the commentary on the Eleventh Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Twelve

The Killing of the Demon Aghāsura

|| 10.12.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

kvacid vanāśāya mano dadhad vrajāt prātaḥ samutthāya vayasya-vatsapān

prabodhayañ chṛṅga-raveṇa cāruṇā vinirgato vatsa-puraḥsaro hariḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: O King, one day Kṛṣṇa decided to take His breakfast as a picnic in the forest. Having risen early in the morning, He blew His bugle made of horn and woke all the cowherd boys and calves with its beautiful sound. Then Kṛṣṇa and the boys, keeping their respective groups of calves before them, proceeded from Vrajabhūmi to the forest.

COMMENTARY

The Twelfth Chapter describes Kṛṣṇa's playing with His friends, and their entering the body of the serpent demon Aghāsura. To save His friends Kṛṣṇa also entered the demon and killed him by expanding His body.

One day (*kvacit*) Kṛṣṇa decided to enjoy a picnic in the forest (*vanāśāya*). Only Kṛṣṇa's name (*hariḥ*) is mentioned, indicating that Rohiṇī forcefully kept Balarāma at home in order to bathe Him and perform auspicious rites on His birthday.

|| 10.12.2 ||

tenaiva sākaṁ pṛthukāḥ sahasraśaḥ snigdhāḥ suśig-vetra-viṣāṇa-veṇavaḥ

svān svān sahasropari-saṅkhyayānvitān vatsān puraskṛtya viniryayur mudā

TRANSLATION

At that time, hundreds and thousands of cowherd boys came out of their respective homes in Vrajabhūmi and joined Kṛṣṇa, keeping before them their hundreds and thousands of groups of calves. The boys were very beautiful, and they were equipped with lunch bags, bugles, flutes, and sticks for controlling the calves.

COMMENTARY

2-3 *Pṛthukāḥ* refers to the cowherd boys. They were holding sticks, horns, flutes and lunch bags.

Sahasra pari sankhya means ten thousand. Kṛṣṇa had an *asaṅkhya* number of calves. A *parardha* is one followed by seventeen zeros. A *parardha x parardha x parardha x parardha* equals one *Asaṅkhya*. One should not argue however that such a large number of cows could not possibly fit into the thirty-two square mile area of Vṛndāvana, because the *dhāma* is unlimited by the inconceivable energy of the Lord. Even a small portion of the holy *dhāma* is sufficient to accommodate billions of universes each measuring fifty million miles in diameter. Kṛṣṇa showed this to Brahmā in a later chapter. The *Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta* says there is no question of impediments, obstacles or limitations because the Lord, His associates, and His holy *dhāma* have inconceivable power (*acintya-śaktih*). Kṛṣṇa's cowherd boyfriends were ornamented by their mothers with necklaces of crystal and *guñjā* seed beads before entering the forest. Once in the forest, they ornamented themselves with forest fruits and flowers.

|| 10.12.3 ||

kṛṣṇa-vatsair asaṅkhyātair yūthī-kṛtya sva-vatsakān

cārayanto 'rbha-līlābhir vijahrus tatra tatra ha

TRANSLATION

Along with the cowherd boys and their own groups of calves, Kṛṣṇa came out with an unlimited number of calves assembled. Then all the boys began to sport in the forest in a greatly playful spirit.

|| 10.12.4 ||

phala-prabāla-stavaka-sumanaḥ-piccha-dhātubhiḥ

kāca-guñjā-maṇi-svarṇa-bhūṣitā apy abhūṣayan

TRANSLATION

Although all these boys were already decorated by their mothers with ornaments of kāca, guñjā, pearls and gold, when they went into the forest they further decorated themselves with fruits, green leaves, bunches of flowers, peacock feathers and soft minerals.

|| 10.12.5 ||

muṣṇanto 'nyonya-śikyādīn jñātān ārāc ca cikṣipuḥ

tatratyāś ca punar dūrād dhasantaś ca punar daduḥ

TRANSLATION

All the cowherd boys used to steal one another's lunch bags. When a boy came to understand that his bag had been taken away, the other boys would throw it farther away, to a more distant place, and those standing there would throw it still farther. When the proprietor of the bag became disappointed, the other boys would laugh, the proprietor would cry, and then the bag would be returned.

COMMENTARY

The cowherd boys used to steal (*muṣṇantaḥ*) each other's articles. One boy would steal another's food container, take it to a distant place, and hide it under a tree surrounded by thorn bushes and red ants. When the boy whose lunch bag was stolen tried to retrieve it, other boys would throw it farther away. When he ran after it, they would throw it still farther. The boy would cry, and then the other boys would laugh and return his lunch bag.

|| 10.12.6 ||

yadi dūraṁ gataḥ kṛṣṇo vana-śobhekṣaṇāya tam

ahaṁ pūrvam ahaṁ pūrvam iti saṁspṛśya remire

TRANSLATION

Sometimes Kṛṣṇa would go to a somewhat distant place to see the beauty of the forest. Then all the other boys would run to accompany Him, each one saying, "I shall be the first to run and touch Kṛṣṇa! I shall touch Kṛṣṇa first!" In this way they enjoyed life by repeatedly touching Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

When Kṛṣṇa wandered off to see the beauty of a distant forest, the boys would run after Him, shouting, "I will touch Kṛṣṇa first!" "No, I will." "No. I will."

|| 10.12.7-11 ||

kecid veṇūn vādayanto dhmāntaḥ śṛṅgāṇi kecana

kecid bhṛṅgaiḥ pragāyantaḥ kūjantaḥ kokilaiḥ pare

vicchāyābhiḥ pradhāvanto gacchantaḥ sādhu-haṁsakaiḥ

bakair upaviśantaś ca nṛtyantaś ca kalāpibhiḥ

vikarṣantaḥ kīśa-bālān ārohantaś ca tair drumān

vikurvantaś ca taiḥ sākaṁ plavantaś ca palāśiṣu

sākaṁ bhekair vilaṅghantaḥ saritaḥ srava-samplutāḥ

vihasantaḥ praticchāyāḥ śapantaś ca pratisvanān

itthaṁ satāṁ brahma-sukhānubhūtyā dāsyaṁ gatānāṁ para-daivatena

māyāśritānāṁ nara-dārakeṇa sākaṁ vijahruḥ kṛta-puṇya-puñjāḥ

TRANSLATION

All the boys would be differently engaged. Some boys blew their flutes, and others blew bugles made of horn. Some imitated the buzzing of the bumblebees, and others imitated the voice of the cuckoo. Some boys imitated flying birds by running after the birds' shadows on the ground, some imitated the beautiful movements and attractive postures of the swans, some sat down with the ducks, sitting silently, and others imitated the dancing of the peacocks. Some boys attracted young monkeys in the trees, some jumped into the trees, imitating the monkeys, some made faces as the monkeys were accustomed to do, and others jumped from one branch to another. Some boys went to the waterfalls and crossed over the river, jumping with the frogs, and when they saw their own reflections on the water they would laugh. They would also condemn the sounds of their own echoes. In this way, all the cowherd boys used to play with Kṛṣṇa, who is the source of the Brahman effulgence for jñānīs desiring to merge into that effulgence, who is the Supreme Personality of Godhead for devotees who have accepted eternal servitorship, and who for ordinary persons is but another ordinary child. The cowherd boys, having accumulated the results of pious activities for many lives, were able to associate in this way with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. How can one explain their great fortune?

COMMENTARY

Verses 7-10: The cowherd boys blew bugles (*dhmāntaḥ*) made of buffalo horns, chased the shadows of the birds, and pulled the tails of baby monkeys. They would climb the trees by grabbing the tails of the monkeys hanging from the branches. After imitating the funny faces of the monkeys, the boys would jump from tree branch to branch. They leaped after the frogs into pools of water, which were created by the cascading waterfalls. Upon seeing their reflections on the water, they would laugh heartily.

Raising their arms, the boys would shout loudly in a playful mood. Then they would curse their echoes saying, "*Aaare* (*ahah*)! Who is that speaking?" Hearing a single syllable echo back, the boys would become angry. "What is this?" The echo would reply vibrating "*re—re-re*." And the boys would say, "Today you will die!" In this way they would curse again and again and never come to an end.

Verse 11: After describing the playing of the cowherd boys, this verse shows the unique good fortune of the Vrajavāsīs as compared with others. There are three types of people in this world: *karmīs, jñānīs* and *bhaktas*. The word *satāṁ* indicates those *jñānīs* who possess some trace of devotion. The inhabitants of Vraja used to play freely with Kṛṣṇa who is the source of the knowledge and happiness the *jñānīs* seek in Brahman. One can understand from this that Kṛṣṇa's body, with which the Vrajavāsīs played, contains the Brahman.

The word *satāṁ* (transcendentalists) cannot apply to those *jñānīs* who think that Kṛṣṇa's body is material. The phrase *dāsya gatāna* refers to all the genuine devotees besides the Vrajavāsīs, who see Kṛṣṇa as their worshipable Lord. The Vrajavāsīs were so fortunate

that they directly played with Kṛṣṇa who is seen by these other devotees as their reverent Lord.

The Vrajavāsīs joyfully sported with Kṛṣṇa, who is perceived as an ordinary human (*naradārakeṇa*) by the materialistic sense enjoyers covered by the illusory potency (*mayaśrītānāṁ*) of the Lord. The *jñānīs* have realization of Kṛṣṇa but they cannot play with Him. The *dāsya bhaktas*, the Lord's surrendered servants, worship Kṛṣṇa in reverence, but they are not qualified to play with Kṛṣṇa. The *karmīs* have no respect for Kṛṣṇa so they neither realize nor worship Him, what to speak of playing with Him.

Although Kṛṣṇa is made of complete bliss, He experienced intense ecstasy playing with the Vrajavāsīs in various pastimes of love. They too attained the pinnacle of joy in His association. Therefore, the Vrajavāsīs were more fortunate than all others (*kṛta puṇya*). Of course, this is a material viewpoint. For the nitya siddha Vrajavāsīs, Kṛṣṇa's eternal associates who far surpass the *jñānīs* and *dāsya bhaktas*, the cause of the playing with Kṛṣṇa is not material piety (*puṇya*). Here the word *puṇya* (*kṛta-puṇya-puñjāḥ*) can only mean activities pleasing to Kṛṣṇa, by which Kṛṣṇa comes under the devotee's control. It does not mean material piety or heaps of good deeds.

|| 10.12.12 ||

yat-pāda-pāṁsur bahu-janma-kṛcchrato dhṛtātmabhir yogibhir apy alabhyaḥ

sa eva yad-dṛg-viṣayaḥ svayaṁ sthitaḥ kiṁ varṇyate diṣṭam ato vrajaukasām

TRANSLATION

Yogīs may undergo severe austerities and penances for many births by practicing yama, niyama, āsana and prāṇāyāma, none of which are easily performed. Yet in due course of time, when these yogīs attain the perfection of controlling the mind, they will still be unable to taste even a particle of dust from the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. What then can we describe about the great fortune of the inhabitants of Vrajabhūmi, Vṛndāvana, with whom the Supreme Personality of Godhead personally lived and who saw the Lord face to face?

COMMENTARY

What to speak of playing with Kṛṣṇa, even establishing a relationship with Kṛṣṇa is very rare. That is the intent of this verse. The *yogīs* cannot attain even one particle of dust of Kṛṣṇa's feet (*pāda pāṁsuḥ*). Nor can the *yogīs* attain even one particle of reflected light from the trees of Vṛndāvana (*padapa*: tree*, amsuh*: particle).

Those who fully concentrate their minds (*dhrta-atmabhih*) cannot attain Kṛṣṇa. Thus it was stated earlier that Kṛṣṇa is *sukhapa*, not easily attained. *Svayaṁ sthita* (being self situated) indicates that seeing Kṛṣṇa does not depend even on the performance of *sādhana*.

"Oh what great fortune (*diṣṭam atah*)" or "What a happy festival (*diṣṭa maho*)!" Who can describe the good fortune or happiness of the Vrajavāsīs who constantly see Kṛṣṇa? Such fortune is unobtai-nable by the *yogīs*. Though they concentrate their minds for lifetimes, they cannot even attain a particle of dust at Kṛṣṇa's feet.

|| 10.12.13 ||

athāgha-nāmābhyapatan mahāsuras teṣāṁ sukha-krīḍana-vīkṣaṇākṣamaḥ

nityaṁ yad-antar nija-jīvitepsubhiḥ pītāmṛtair apy amaraiḥ pratīkṣyate

TRANSLATION

My dear King Parīkṣit, thereafter there appeared a great demon named Aghāsura, whose death was being awaited even by the demigods. The demigods drank nectar every day, but still they feared this great demon and awaited his death. This demon could not tolerate the transcendental pleasure being enjoyed in the forest by the cowherd boys.

COMMENTARY

Seeing that the boys were relishing ever-increasing bliss by playing, and that they would not stop playing, and knowing that they would not take time out to eat, and that the eating time had already passed, and seeing that it was also necessary to kill a demon, Kṛṣṇa's *līlā-śakti* inspired the Aghāsura demon through the Supersoul and brought him near the boys.

Aghāsura could not tolerate the fun the boys were having. The various sports they played filled the boys with pleasure, but the demon experienced only suffering. The demigods (*amaraiḥ*) who drink the celestial nectar (*amṛta*) were afraid of being killed by the demon, so they eagerly awaited his death (*yad antaḥ*). *Yad* can also refer to playing and *antah* can mean in the heart. Then the meaning would be: Aghāsura could not tolerate the *gopa's* playing, which was meditated upon by the demigods, and which alone gave them the desire to maintain their lives (*nija jīvtepsubhih*), though they already drank nectar, amṛta.

|| 10.12.14 ||

dṛṣṭvārbhakān kṛṣṇa-mukhān aghāsuraḥ kaṁsānuśiṣṭaḥ sa bakī-bakānujaḥ

ayaṁ tu me sodara-nāśa-kṛt tayor dvayor mamainaṁ sa-balaṁ haniṣye

TRANSLATION

Aghāsura, who had been sent by Kaṁsa, was the younger brother of Pūtanā and Bakāsura. Therefore when he came and saw Kṛṣṇa at the head of all the cowherd boys, he thought, "This Kṛṣṇa has killed my sister and brother, Pūtanā and Bakāsura. Therefore, in order to please them both, I shall kill this Kṛṣṇa, along with His assistants, the other cowherd boys."

|| 10.12.15 ||

ete yadā mat-suhṛdos tilāpaḥ kṛtās tadā naṣṭa-samā vrajaukasaḥ

prāṇe gate varṣmasu kā nu cintā prajāsavaḥ prāṇa-bhṛto hi ye te

TRANSLATION

Aghāsura thought: If somehow or other I can make Kṛṣṇa and His associates serve as the last offering of Śeṣame and water for the departed souls of my brother and sister, then the inhabitants of Vrajabhūmi, for whom these boys are the life and soul, will automatically die. If there is no life, there is no need for the body; consequently, when their sons are dead, naturally all the inhabitants of Vraja will die.

COMMENTARY

Verses 14-15: Observing all the cowherd boys headed by Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa mukhan*), Aghāsura (*saḥ*), the younger brother of Pūtanā (*bakī*) and Bakasura, considered: The second half of verse 14 and verse 15 are Aghāsura's thoughts:

"This person (*ayam tu*) has killed my older sister Pūtanā (*bakī*) and my brother (*baka sodara nasa krt*). On their behalf therefore (*atha*), I will kill Kṛṣṇa as a *pinda* offering along with His followers (*sabalaṁ*). If Kṛṣṇa and the other boys become the sacrificial offering (*tilāpaḥ*) to the Pretas for my brother and sister (*mat suhṛdoḥ*), Nanda and the other inhabitants of Vraja will automatically die. If life has left the body, need we worry any more about the bodies (*varsmasu*)? Living entities (*ye prāṇa bhṛtaḥ*) live through their children (*te prajāsavaḥ*). Therefore if their beloved child Kṛṣṇa dies, then Nanda, Yaśodā and the rest of the Vrajavāsīs will automatically die without our having to kill them."

|| 10.12.16 ||

iti vyavasyājagaraṁ bṛhad vapuḥ sa yojanāyāma-mahādri-pīvaram

dhṛtvādbhutaṁ vyātta-guhānanaṁ tadā pathi vyaśeta grāsanāśayā khalaḥ

TRANSLATION

After thus deciding, that crooked Aghāsura assumed the form of a huge python, as thick as a big mountain and as long as eight miles. Having assumed this wonderful python's body, he spread his mouth like a big cave in the mountains and lay down on the road, expecting to swallow Kṛṣṇa and His associates the cowherd boys.

COMMENTARY

Thinking in this way, Aghāsura lay on the path in order to devour Kṛṣṇa and His friends. He was one *yojana* (eight miles) in length, and as thick (*pīvaram*) as a huge mountain (*mahādri*). His mouth spread open (*vyāttam*) like a cave.

|| 10.12.17 ||

dharādharoṣṭho jaladottaroṣṭho dary-ānanānto giri-śṛṅga-daṁṣṭraḥ

dhvāntāntar-āsyo vitatādhva-jihvaḥ paruṣānila-śvāsa-davekṣaṇoṣṇaḥ

TRANSLATION

His lower lip rested on the surface of the earth, and his upper lip was touching the clouds in the sky. The borders of his mouth resembled the sides of a big cave in a mountain, and the middle of his mouth was as dark as possible. His tongue resembled a broad traffic-way, his breath was like a warm wind, and his eyes blazed like fire.

COMMENTARY

Aghāsura's lower lip rested on the earth and his upper lip touched the clouds. The borders of his mouth resembled the sides of a big mountain cave. The interior of the mouth was as dark as night, and his tongue resembled a wide road. His breath was like a burning fire and his eyes blazed like fire.

|| 10.12.18 ||

dṛṣṭvā taṁ tādṛśaṁ sarve matvā vṛndāvana-śriyam

vyāttājagara-tuṇḍena hy utprekṣante sma līlayā

TRANSLATION

Upon seeing this demon's wonderful form, which resembled a great python, the boys thought that it must be a beautiful scenic spot of Vṛndāvana. Thereafter, they imagined it to be similar to the mouth of a great python. In other words, the boys, unafraid, thought that it was a statue made in the shape of a great python for the enjoyment of their pastimes.

COMMENTARY

A few boys thought that Aghāsura was a big snake, so they started to run away upon seeing it. Other boys however thought that Aghāsura was simply a wonderful scenic spot of Vṛndāvana. They comforted their fearful friends saying, "Oh fools, a snake can never be this big. It is just some statue fashioned by the Lord so that we can appreciate the splendor of Vṛndāvana even more. Kṛṣṇa made it look like a huge snake with a big gaping mouth."

In this way the cowherd boys thought the Lord's creation was something like the gaping mouth of the serpent made just for pastimes (*līlayā*).

|| 10.12.19 ||

aho mitrāṇi gadata sattva-kūṭaṁ puraḥ sthitam

asmat-saṅgrāsana-vyātta-vyāla-tuṇḍāyate na vā

TRANSLATION

The boys said: Dear friends, is this creature dead, or is it actually a living python with its mouth spread wide just to swallow us all? Kindly clear up this doubt.

COMMENTARY

Some boys called out to their elder friends to confirm their thoughts: "Is this some type of immovable living entity?" The word *kūṭa* means a peak, indicating some large animal. "Is it some resting tiger or other big animal waiting to devour us with its open mouth?"

|| 10.12.20 ||

satyam arka-karāraktam uttarā-hanuvad ghanam

adharā-hanuvad rodhas tat-praticchāyayāruṇam

TRANSLATION

Thereafter they decided: Dear friends, this is certainly an animal sitting here to swallow us all. Its upper lip resembles a cloud reddened by the sunshine, and its lower lip resembles the reddish shadows of a cloud.

COMMENTARY

Agreeing with them, one boy said, “Its upper lip resembles a cloud reddened by the sunshine, and its lower lip appears like the reddish shadows of a cloud.”

|| 10.12.21 ||

pratispardhete sṛkkabhyāṁ savyāsavye nagodare

tuṅga-śṛṅgālayo ’py etās tad-daṁṣṭrābhiś ca paśyata

TRANSLATION

On the left and right, the two depressions resembling mountain caves are the corners of its mouth, and the high mountain peaks are its teeth.

COMMENTARY

“Look here on the left and right, the two depressions resembling mountain caves are the corners of its mouth, and (pointing with his forefinger) the high mountain peaks are like a serpent’s teeth.”

|| 10.12.22 ||

āstṛtāyāma-mārgo ’yaṁ rasanāṁ pratigarjati

eṣāṁ antar-gataṁ dhvāntam etad apy antar-ānanam

TRANSLATION

In length and breadth the animal's tongue resembles a broad traffic-way, and the inside of its mouth is very, very dark, like a cave in a mountain.

COMMENTARY

"The animal's tongue (*rasana*) resembles a wide (*āstṛtāyāma*) road. The inside of its mouth is very dark, like a mountain cave."

|| 10.12.23 ||

dāvoṣṇa-khara-vāto 'yaṁ śvāsavad bhāti paśyata

tad-dagdha-sattva-durgandho 'py antar-āmiṣa-gandhavat

TRANSLATION

The hot fiery wind is the breath coming out of his mouth, which is giving off the bad smell of burning flesh because of all the dead bodies he has eaten.

COMMENTARY

"The hot fiery wind is the breath from his mouth, which is giving off the bad smell of burning flesh because of all the animals he has eaten."

|| 10.12.24 ||

asmān kim atra grasitā niviṣṭān ayaṁ tathā ced bakavad vinaṅkṣyati

kṣaṇād aneneti bakāry-uśan-mukhaṁ vīkṣyoddhasantaḥ kara-tāḍanair yayuḥ

TRANSLATION

Then the boys said, "Has this living creature come to swallow us? If he does so, he will immediately be killed like Bakāsura, without delay." Thus they looked at the beautiful face of Kṛṣṇa, the enemy of Bakāsura, and, laughing loudly and clapping their hands, they entered the mouth of the python.

COMMENTARY

Some of the boys spoke with a little fear: "If this creature is really a snake, he may swallow us if we enter his mouth."

One boy replied to pacify them: “If that is so, then in an instant (*kṣaṇād*) Kṛṣṇa (*aneneti*) will kill him just as He vanquished Baka. Kṛṣṇa is right here, so why should we worry?” Saying this, the boy smiled and looked toward Kṛṣṇa, who was standing some distance away.

Getting this confirmation, all the cowherd boys began to laugh loudly while speaking, “Hey *sakhas*! Let’s find out what is in that mouth.” Then they entered the demon’s mouth out of boyish curiosity. Clapping their hands to show their courage and fearlessness, or to dismiss the snake, the boys ran inside the snake’s gaping mouth. The calves ran after them with their tails raised.

|| 10.12.25 ||

itthaṁ mitho ’tathyam ataj-jña-bhāṣitaṁ
śrutvā vicintyety amṛṣā mṛṣāyate

rakṣo viditvākhila-bhūta-hṛt-sthitaḥ
svānāṁ niroddhuṁ bhagavān mano dadhe

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is situated as antaryāmī, the Supersoul, in the core of everyone’s heart, heard the boys talking among themselves about the artificial python. Unknown to them, it was actually Aghāsura, a demon who had appeared as a python. Kṛṣṇa, knowing this, wanted to forbid His associates to enter the demon’s mouth.

COMMENTARY

Hearing the boys talk about the snake as if it were something unreal, Kṛṣṇa began to think: “What is actually a snake’s mouth, My friends think is some wonderful scenery of Vṛndāvana. This is not just a snake, but the demon named Aghāsura.”

How did Kṛṣṇa know this? Kṛṣṇa knows everything because He is situated in everyone’s heart (*akhila bhūta hṛt sthitaḥ*) as the Supersoul, *antaryāmī*. Kṛṣṇa then decided to prevent His boyfriends from entering the snake’s mouth.

|| 10.12.26 ||

tāvat praviṣṭās tv asurodarāntaraṁ paraṁ na gīrṇāḥ śiśavaḥ sa-vatsāḥ

pratīkṣamāṇena bakāri-veśanaṁ hata-sva-kānta-smaraṇena rakṣasā

TRANSLATION

In the meantime, while Kṛṣṇa was considering how to stop them, all the cowherd boys entered the mouth of the demon. The demon, however, did not swallow them, for he was thinking of his own relatives who had been killed by Kṛṣṇa and was just waiting for Kṛṣṇa to enter his mouth.

COMMENTARY

Just as Kṛṣṇa was deciding to stop them, the boys entered the serpent's mouth, but the serpent did not swallow them. Why didn't he swallow them? The demon was remembering the death of his brother and sister (*hata sva kānta smaraṇena*) at the hands of the Lord so he was waiting for Kṛṣṇa.

One should not think that Kṛṣṇa's *satya sankalpa śakti* (potency that fulfills every desire of the Lord) was thwarted because Kṛṣṇa could not stop the boys from entering the serpent's mouth though He wanted to. On the other hand, Kṛṣṇa's devotees had a desire to be saved by Kṛṣṇa if by chance they were swallowed by the demon. Of the two desires, the desire of the devotee prevails, according to the principle that the Lord is controlled by His devotee. This was perfectly arranged by Kṛṣṇa's ever-watchful *līlā-śakti*, which harmonizes everything by removing all seeming contradictions.

|| 10.12.27 ||

tān vīkṣya kṛṣṇaḥ sakalābhaya-prado

hy ananya-nāthān sva-karād avacyutān

dīnāṁś ca mṛtyor jaṭharāgni-ghāsān

ghṛṇārdito diṣṭa-kṛtena vismitaḥ

TRANSLATION

Kṛṣṇa saw that all the cowherd boys, who did not know anyone but Him as their Lord, had now gone out of His hand and were helpless, having entered like straws into the fire of the abdomen of Aghāsura, who was death personified. It was intolerable for Kṛṣṇa to be separated from His friends the cowherd boys.

Therefore, as if seeing that this had been arranged by His internal potency, Kṛṣṇa was momentarily struck with wonder and unsure of what to do.

COMMENTARY

Seeing that the boys were helplessly beyond His control, like jewels slipping from one's hands, and that they were entering like straws into the fire of the snake's stomach, Kṛṣṇa become filled with compassion (*ghṛṇaya arditah*). Kṛṣṇa was astonished at the actions of His *līlā-śakti* (*diṣṭa kṛtena*) or of time (*diṣṭa*) in making the cowherd boys enter the serpent's mouth.

What was the cause of Kṛṣṇa's astonishment? The Lord thought, "It is not possible for these cowherd boys to have *prārabdha karma*. Besides, the Supersoul does not give them the tendency for *karma*, because the Supersoul is My expansion and does not do anything unfavorable to Me. Therefore, the *līlā-śakti* has made this seemingly unfavorable arrangement with a desire to put Me, who abound in *prema*, in a compassionate mood (*karuṇa rasa*) on seeing this unfortunate situation. It astonishes Me how she controls Me, the very form of all rāsas and the king of all *līlās* (*līlā puruṣottama*)."

Though Kṛṣṇa's sorrow due to separation from His friends remained, it somewhat reduced with the rise of astonishment (*vismaya bhāva*). This is the meaning here.

|| 10.12.28 ||

kṛtyaṁ kim atrāsya khalasya jīvanaṁ na vā amīṣāṁ ca satāṁ vihiṁsanam

dvayaṁ kathaṁ syād iti saṁvicintya jñātvāviśat tuṇḍam aśeṣa-dṛg ghariḥ

TRANSLATION

Now, what was to be done? How could both the killing of this demon and the saving of the devotees be performed simultaneously? Kṛṣṇa, being unlimitedly potent, decided to wait for an intelligent means by which He could simultaneously save the boys and kill the demon. Then He entered the mouth of Aghāsura.

COMMENTARY

"What should I do in this dangerous situation? How can I kill the demon without harming the boys?" After thinking in this way and finding a solution, Kṛṣṇa entered the mouth of the serpent. Kṛṣṇa always knows best what to do in the present and in the

future (*aśeṣa dṛk*), and He takes away (*harī*) danger for His devotee and the life of a demon.

|| 10.12.29 ||

tadā ghana-cchadā devā bhayād dhā-heti cukruśuḥ

jahṛṣur ye ca kaṁsādyāḥ kauṇapās tv agha-bāndhavāḥ

TRANSLATION

When Kṛṣṇa entered the mouth of Aghāsura, the demigods hidden behind the clouds exclaimed, "Alas! Alas!" But the friends of Aghāsura, like Kaṁsa and other demons, were jubilant.

COMMENTARY

When Kṛṣṇa entered the mouth of Aghāsura, the demigods hiding behind the clouds out of fear of Kaṁsa exclaimed, "Alas! Alas!" Though the demigods were aware of the Lord's powers, because they are also devotees they shouted in anxiety for Kṛṣṇa's safety. The intrinsic nature of *bhakti* is affection, and the nature of affection is to sometimes lose one's power of discrimination. Kaṁsa, his *rākṣasa* friends (*kauṇapa* means eaters of corpses), and the sons and brothers of Aghāsura rejoiced on hearing the news from their spies.

|| 10.12.30 ||

tac chrutvā bhagavān kṛṣṇas tv avyayaḥ sārbha-vatsakam

cūrṇī-cikīrṣor ātmānaṁ tarasā vavṛdhe gale

TRANSLATION

When the invincible Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, heard the demigods crying "Alas! Alas!" from behind the clouds, He immediately enlarged Himself within the demon's throat, just to save Himself and the cowherd boys, His own associates, from the demon who wished to smash them.

COMMENTARY

Hearing the demigods' cries of dismay and the demons' rejoicing, Kṛṣṇa immediately enlarged Himself within the demon's throat to save Himself and the cowherd boys from

being crushed in Aghāsura's stomach. Kṛṣṇa did this to reverse the sounds of lamentation from the demigods and the demons shouts of joy. In the pastimes of killing Sakatāsura, Tṛṇāvarta, and getting tied to the grinding mortar, Kṛṣṇa remained as a small child and manifested His majestic powers. Therefore in the throat of Aghāsura, Kṛṣṇa expanded His form to show that He did not lack the power to expand Himself in size. In the *dāmodara-līlā* and other pastimes the Lord maintained His form as a child because His devotees could taste the full sweetness within in that form. Although they experienced astonishment by witnessing Kṛṣṇa's prowess, it did not disturb their conception of the Lord as their child. But here in the absence of His parents who were relishing His sweetness, Kṛṣṇa, being the Supreme Lord, adopted a more common method of just expanding Himself to kill the demon.

|| 10.12.31 ||

tato 'tikāyasya niruddha-mārgiṇo hy udgīrṇa-dṛṣṭer bhramatas tv itas tataḥ

pūrṇo 'ntar-aṅge pavano niruddho mūrdhan vinirbhidya vinirgato bahiḥ

TRANSLATION

Then, because Kṛṣṇa had increased the size of His body, the demon extended his own body to a very large size. Nonetheless, his breathing stopped, he suffocated, and his eyes rolled here and there and popped out. The demon's life air, however, could not pass through any outlet, and therefore it finally burst out through a hole in the top of the demon's head.

COMMENTARY

The demon's throat blocked up (*niruddha mārgiṇo*), his eyes popped out, and his life air, being trapped in his body with no outlet, finally burst out through the *brahma randhra* (a hole atop his head), and he attained perfection (*pūrṇah*).

|| 10.12.32 ||

tenaiva sarveṣu bahir gateṣu

prāṇeṣu vatsān suhṛdaḥ paretān

dṛṣṭyā svayotthāpya tad-anvitaḥ punar
vaktrān mukundo bhagavān viniryayau

TRANSLATION

When all the demon's life air had passed away through that hole in the top of his head, Kṛṣṇa glanced over the dead calves and cowherd boys and brought

them back to life. Then Mukunda, who can give one liberation, came out from the demon's mouth with His friends and the calves.

COMMENTARY

The cowherd boys and calves, who had fainted due to separation from Kṛṣṇa and from the heat of the serpent's belly, were brought back to consciousness by the nectar shower of Kṛṣṇa's glance.

|| 10.12.33 ||

pīnāhi-bhogotthitam adbhutaṁ mahaj jyotiḥ sva-dhāmnā jvalayad diśo daśa

pratīkṣya khe 'vasthitam īśa-nirgamaṁ viveśa tasmin miṣatāṁ divaukasām

TRANSLATION

From the body of the gigantic python, a glaring effulgence came out, illuminating all directions, and stayed individually in the sky until Kṛṣṇa came out from the corpse's mouth. Then, as all the demigods looked on, this effulgence entered into Kṛṣṇa's body.

COMMENTARY

Śrīdhara Swami says that the effulgence coming out from the python's body became purified, and attained the status of *suddha-sattva*. A demon's getting liberation is displayed here to instill faith in people.

Though the light of the soul, like the great light of the *Parabrahman*, is normally invisible, Kṛṣṇa arranged that the individual effulgence of the soul was visible to everyone to directly show the world the Lord's quality of granting liberation even to a demon. This is Sanatana Gosvami's opinion in *Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī*.

According to later verses 38 and 39. Aghāsura attained *sārūpya-muktī*, a completely spiritual body exactly like that of Viṣṇu and attained the Lord's abode. Therefore the light which was visible was the light from Aghāsura's spiritual body which he attained at that moment. Because his body was spiritual, it could not be seen with material eyes. Aghāsura's entering the Lord's body was just a show as in the case of Śiśupāla and Dantavakra. Though Śiśupāla and Dantavakra attained *sārūpya-muktī* as eternal associates of the Lord (the former Jaya and Vijaya), when they died a light from their bodies entered the Lord. This is another opinion about the visibility of the light. This happened in the presence of the demigods (*miṣatāṁ divaukasām*) who were greatly

astonished. With the use of genitive absolute it can also mean that Aghāsura's soul entered Kṛṣṇa, not caring for the demigods even though they were present.

|| 10.12.34 ||

tato 'tihṛṣṭāḥ sva-kṛto 'kṛtārhaṇaṁ puṣpaiḥ sugā apsarāsaś ca nartanaiḥ

gītaiḥ surā vādya-dharāś ca vādyakaiḥ stavaiś ca viprā jaya-niḥsvanair gaṇāḥ

TRANSLATION

Thereafter, everyone being pleased, the demigods began to shower flowers from Nandana-kānana, the celestial dancing girls began to dance, and the Gandharvas, who are famous for singing, offered songs of prayer. The drummers began to beat their kettledrums, and the brāhmaṇas offered Vedic hymns. In this way, both in the heavens and on earth, everyone began to perform his own duties, glorifying the Lord.

COMMENTARY

The demigods peformed (*akrta*) worship (*arhanam*) of Kṛṣṇa, who creates Himself (*sva krtah*). *Su gah* refers to the Gandharvas who sing very beautifully. *Vādya dharās* means Vidyadharas, the celestial drummers. *Vipras* means *brāhmaṇas* like Vasistha Muni and others. *Ganāḥ* means everyone else like Garuḍa.

|| 10.12.35 ||

tad-adbhuta-stotra-suvādya-gītikā-jayādi-naikotsava-maṅgala-svanān

śrutvā sva-dhāmno 'nty aja āgato 'cirād dṛṣṭvā mahīśasya jagāma vismayam

TRANSLATION

When Lord Brahmā heard the wonderful ceremony going on near his planet, accompanied by music and songs and sounds of "Jaya! Jaya!" he immediately came down to see the function. Upon seeing so much glorification of Lord Kṛṣṇa, he was completely astonished.

COMMENTARY

Not one but an infinity of festivals was produced by the wonderful prayers, melodious instrumental music, soft celestial songs and shouts of "Jaya, Jaya!" Even in the higher

planetary systems like Janaloka, Maharloka and Tapoloka the festival of glorification of Kṛṣṇa was going on. Brahmā heard the singing. While the light of Aghāsura's soul was passing to Vaikuṇṭha, Brahmā (*ajah*), being astonished (*vismayam*) at Kṛṣṇa's glories, came invisibly to Vṛndāvana. Or it can mean: Coming to Vṛndāvana and seeing Kṛṣṇa's glory, Brahmā was astonished.

|| 10.12.36 ||

rājann ājagaraṁ carma śuṣkaṁ vṛndāvane 'dbhutam

vrajaukasāṁ bahu-tithaṁ babhūvākrīḍa-gahvaram

TRANSLATION

O King Parīkṣit, when the python-shaped body of Aghāsura dried up into merely a big skin, it became a wonderful place for the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana to visit, and it remained so for a long, long time.

COMMENTARY

The dry skin of the snake stayed a long time in Vṛndāvana, and became a wonderful cave in which the children used to sport and play.

|| 10.12.37 ||

etat kaumārajaṁ karma harer ātmāhi-mokṣaṇam

mṛtyoḥ paugaṇḍake bālā dṛṣṭvocur vismitā vraje

TRANSLATION

This incident of Kṛṣṇa's saving Himself and His associates from death and of giving deliverance to Aghāsura, who had assumed the form of a python, took place when Kṛṣṇa was five years old. It was disclosed in Vrajabhūmi after one year, as if it had taken place on that very day.

COMMENTARY

There was another astonishing event which you should hear about. Though Kṛṣṇa saved His friends and liberated Aghāsura when He was five years old (*kaumara jam*), the cowherd boys reported the incident when they were six years old (*paugaṇḍa*). It was

disclosed in Vrajabhūmi after one year, as if the incident had taken place on that very day.

|| 10.12.38 ||

naitad vicitraṁ manujārbha-māyinaḥ

parāvarāṇāṁ paramasya vedhasaḥ

agho 'pi yat-sparśana-dhauta-pātakaḥ
prāpātma-sāmyaṁ tv asatāṁ sudurlabham

TRANSLATION

Kṛṣṇa is the cause of all causes. The causes and effects of the material world, both higher and lower, are all created by the Supreme Lord, the original controller. When Kṛṣṇa appeared as the son of Nanda Mahārāja and Yaśodā, He did so by His causeless mercy. Consequently, for Him to exhibit His unlimited opulence was not at all wonderful. Indeed, He showed such great mercy that even Aghāsura, the most sinful miscreant, was elevated to being one of His associates and achieving sārūpya-mukti, which is actually impossible for materially contaminated persons to attain.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa's form as a human child is His *svarupa* (*manuja māyinah*), for the word *māyā* is well known to mean *svarūpa* in the *Śrutis*. Kṛṣṇa is the cause of all causes by His own free will (*vedhasaḥ*), and is the supreme form among all the expansions and expansions of expansions (*para avarāṇāṁ*). Nothing is impossible for Him.

Therefore, it is not remarkable that Aghāsura was purified of all his sins by touching Kṛṣṇa. Or Aghāsura was purified of his bad odor by Kṛṣṇa's touch. This second meaning can be taken because Pūtanā's body was also freed of bad its odor by contacting Kṛṣṇa. This must have happened because later Kṛṣṇa and his friends used Aghāsura's dead body as a playground. Aghāsura also attained a body exactly resembling that of Nārāyaṇa (*ātma sāmyam*), which is very rare for a demon (*asatāṁ*). *Sāyujya-mukti* is rare for the demons, and *sārūpya-mukti* is rarer still (*sudurlabham*), as this is generally reserved for the devotees.

|| 10.12.39 ||

sakṛd yad-aṅga-pratimāntar-āhitā

manomayī bhāgavatīṁ dadau gatim

sa eva nityātma-sukhānubhūty-abhi-

vyudasta-māyo ʼntar-gato hi kiṁ punaḥ

TRANSLATION

If even only once or even by force one brings the form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead into one's mind, one can attain the supreme salvation by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa, as did Aghāsura. What then is to be said of those whose hearts the Supreme Personality of Godhead enters when He appears as an incarnation, or those who always think of the lotus feet of the Lord, who is the source of transcendental bliss for all living entities and by whom all illusion is completely removed?

COMMENTARY

This verse speaks of the cause of Aghāsura gaining *sārūpya-mukti*. This is not such an amazing accomplishment for Kṛṣṇa, whose form (*aṅga pratima*) should be meditated on (*antarhita*) by the mind (*manomayī*); who awarded the supreme destination (*bhāgavati gati*) to King Khaṭvāṅga and others; who has directly (*eva*) an eternal body (*nitya atma*); whose direct perception brings the greatest happiness and destroys *māyā*; who is the *avatāri* (*paramaḥ*), and who entered the demon's stomach (*antargataḥ*). However, in the case of King Khaṭvāṅga and others, the cause of their attaining the Lord was devotion. In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (11.14.21) Kṛṣṇa says: *bhaktyaham ekaya grahya*, "Only by devotion can I be attained." In Aghāsura's case however, the absence of devotion did not act as a deterrent in attaining the Lord. Though devotion is indeed the general rule, it applies in other cases.

When Kṛṣṇa appears as an *avatāra*, anyone can attain His transcen-dental abode simply by contact, because of the extra surge of His perfect *kṛpa-śakti* at that time. That is why it is said: "One who approaches Me in a mood of either lust, anger, fear, affection, oneness, friendship or devotion will surely attain love for Me that is of that nature." (SB 10.29.15)

"Do not think that this is astonishing for Kṛṣṇa, the master of *yoga*. He gives liberation not only to humans but also to non-moving entities." (SB 10.29.16) Kṛṣṇa's awarding liberation to His enemies is a remarkable quality in His completeness. Kṛṣṇa reciprocates according to the mood of the person approaching Him. From the statement that Aghāsura's body became the playground for the boys for many days, it should be understood that the demon's unfavorable attitude had been transformed into a favorable attitude. Aghāsura had attained *sārūpya-mukti* in Vaikuṇṭha, but he did not attain a form in Vṛndāvana because of his lack of *vraja-bhakti*.

|| 10.12.40 ||

śrī-sūta uvāca

itthaṁ dvijā yādavadeva-dattaḥ śrutvā sva-rātuś caritaṁ vicitram

papraccha bhūyo 'pi tad eva puṇyaṁ vaiyāsakiṁ yan nigṛhīta-cetāḥ

TRANSLATION

Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī said: O learned saints, the childhood pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa are very wonderful. Mahārāja Parīkṣit, after hearing about those pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, who had saved him in the womb of his mother, became steady in his mind and again inquired from Śukadeva Gosvāmī to hear about those pious activities.

COMMENTARY

Mahārāja Parīkṣit, who was protected by Kṛṣṇa (*yadava deva datta*), heard the wonderful pastimes of He who gives Himself to His devotees (*svarātuh*). Parīkṣit fixed his heart on Kṛṣṇa's pastimes (*yad nigṛhīta cetāḥ*), and asked some more questions to Śukadeva.

|| 10.12.41 ||

śrī-rājovāca

brahman kālāntara-kṛtaṁ tat-kālīnaṁ kathaṁ bhavet

yat kaumāre hari-kṛtaṁ jaguḥ paugaṇḍake 'rbhakāḥ

TRANSLATION

Mahārāja Parīkṣit inquired: O great sage, how could things done in the past have been described as being done at the present? Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa performed this pastime of killing Aghāsura during His kaumāra age. How then, during His paugaṇḍa age, could the boys have described this incident as having happened recently?

COMMENTARY

Mahārāja Parīkṣit inquired, "How could things done in the past have been described as being done in the present? How could Kṛṣṇa make the cowherd boys describe the pastimes which happened when they were in their *kaumāra* age (five years) as if they happened recently?"

|| 10.12.42 ||

tad brūhi me mahā-yogin paraṁ kautūhalaṁ guro

nūnam etad dharer eva māyā bhavati nānyathā

TRANSLATION

O greatest yogī, my spiritual master, kindly describe why this happened. I am very much curious to know about it. I think that it was nothing but another illusion due to Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

Māyā here refers to the Lord's internal potency or *śakti* which expertly makes unexpected things happen. Because the verse calls the Lord's *māyā* (*harer māyā*) it cannot mean anything else except *yogamāyā*. Only this potency of Kṛṣṇa can put His eternal associates into illusion.

|| 10.12.43 ||

vayaṁ dhanyatamā loke guro 'pi kṣatra-bandhavaḥ

vayaṁ pibāmo muhus tvattaḥ puṇyaṁ kṛṣṇa-kathāmṛtam

TRANSLATION

O my lord, my spiritual master, although we are the lowest of kṣatriyas, we are glorified and benefited because we have the opportunity of always hearing from you the nectar of the pious activities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

COMMENTARY

Mahārāja Parīkṣit says, "O my spiritual master." This statement implies, "I am your disciple, and because of the rule that 'the *guru* must teach esoteric-topics to the devoted student,' please tell me what should be told." Parīkṣit's devotion is indicated by his own efforts, through the words "I drink the nectar."

|| 10.12.44 ||

śrī-sūta uvāca

itthaṁ sma pṛṣṭaḥ sa tu bādarāyaṇis tat-smāritānanta-hṛtākhilendriyaḥ

kṛcchrāt punar labdha-bahir-dṛśiḥ śanaiḥ pratyāha taṁ bhāgavatottamottama

TRANSLATION

Sūta Gosvāmī said: O Śaunaka, greatest of saints and devotees, when Mahārāja Parīkṣit inquired from Śukadeva Gosvāmī in this way, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, immediately remembering subject matters about Kṛṣṇa within the core of his heart, externally lost contact with the actions of his senses. Thereafter, with great difficulty, he revived his external sensory perception and began to speak to Mahārāja Parīkṣit about kṛṣṇa-kathā.

COMMENTARY

Śukadeva regained external consciousness with great effort (*kṛcchrāt*) because of the loud chanting of the Lord's name by Nārada, Vyāsa and others who were in attendance. The phrase *bhāgavata uttama uttama*, greatest of all great saintly persons, refers to Śaunaka.

Thus ends the commentary on the Twelfth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Thirteen

Brahmā Stealing the Boys and Calves

|| 10.13.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

sādhu pṛṣṭaṁ mahā-bhāga tvayā bhāgavatottama

yan nūtanayasīśasya śṛṇvann api kathāṁ muhuḥ

TRANSLATION

Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O best of devotees, most fortunate Parīkṣit, you have inquired very nicely, for although constantly hearing the pastimes of the Lord, you are perceiving His activities to be newer and newer.

COMMENTARY

This chapter describes a forest picnic, Brahmā's stealing the calves and cowherd boys, the bewilderment of Brahmā, and Kṛṣṇa's manifesting identical boys and calves from His own form.

Kṛṣṇa, whose portion of a portion causes the creation of universes and the bewilderment of Brahmā, showed Himself as the source of delight to all Viṣṇu forms, the cause of bewilderment to Baladeva, and the source of all powers to Brahmā. When Śukadeva addresses Parīkṣit as the best of the devotees (*bhāgavatottama*), the king inquires, "How I am the best among Kṛṣṇa's devotees?" Śukadeva answers, "Because you always taste

the topics of Kṛṣṇa as fresh. Even if you have heard them before, you perceive the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa to be newer and newer."

|| 10.13.2 ||

satām ayaṁ sāra-bhṛtāṁ nisargo yad-artha-vāṇī-śruti-cetasām api

prati-kṣaṇaṁ navya-vad acyutasya yat striyā viṭānām iva sādhu vārtā

TRANSLATION

Paramahaṁsas, devotees who have accepted the essence of life, are attached to Kṛṣṇa in the core of their hearts, and He is the aim of their lives. It is their nature to talk only of Kṛṣṇa at every moment, as if such topics were newer and newer. They are attached to such topics, just as materialists are attached to topics of women and sex.

COMMENTARY

Śukadeva continues, "This is natural for those who are *sāra bhṛtāṁ*, who accept the topics of Kṛṣṇa as the essence and goal of their lives. *Kṛṣṇa-katha* is the center of their words, hearing and thoughts because at every moment they thirst to taste the astonishing names, form and qualities of Acyuta. As a lusty man is attached to topics about women and sex, the *sāra bhṛtāṁ* is intensely attracted to topics about Kṛṣṇa."

|| 10.13.3 ||

śṛṇuṣvāvahito rājann api guhyaṁ vadāmi te

brūyuḥ snigdhasya śiṣyasya guravo guhyam apy uta

TRANSLATION

O King, kindly hear me with great attention. Although the activities of the Supreme Lord are very confidential, no ordinary man being able to understand them, I shall speak about them to you, for spiritual masters explain to a submissive disciple even subject matters that are very confidential and difficult to understand.

|| 10.13.4 ||

tathāgha-vadanān mṛtyo rakṣitvā vatsa-pālakān

sarit-pulinam ānīya bhagavān idam abravīt

TRANSLATION

Then, after saving the boys and calves from the mouth of Aghāsura, who was death personified, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, brought them all to the bank of the river and spoke the following words.

|| 10.13.5 ||

aho 'tiramyaṁ pulinaṁ vayasyāḥ sva-keli-sampan mṛdulāccha-bālukam

sphuṭat-saro-gandha-hṛtāli-patrika-dhvani-pratidhvāna-lasad-drumākulam

TRANSLATION

My dear friends, just see how this riverbank is extremely beautiful because of its pleasing atmosphere. And just see how the blooming lotuses are attracting bees and birds by their aroma. The humming and chirping of the bees and birds is echoing throughout the beautiful trees in the forest. Also, here the sands are clean and soft. Therefore, this must be considered the best place for our sporting and pastimes.

COMMENTARY

Here Śrī Kṛṣṇa describes a most suitable place for a picnic. The riverbank was wide enough to accommodate hundreds of cowherd boys. It had soft, clean sand, perfect for sitting and eating. The Yamunā was full of blossoming lotuses, whose sweet fragrance attracted bees and birds, whose humming and chirping echoed in the forest. The thickly foliated trees provided soothing shade from the scorching sun.

|| 10.13.6 ||

atra bhoktavyam asmābhir divārūḍhaṁ kṣudhārditāḥ

vatsāḥ samīpe 'paḥ pītvā carantu śanakais tṛṇam

TRANSLATION

I think we should take our lunch here, since we are already hungry because the time is very late. Here the calves may drink water and go slowly here and there and eat the grass.

COMMENTARY

The sun had risen up high in the sky (*divā rūddhaṁ*).

|| 10.13.7 ||

tatheti pāyayitvārbhā vatsān ārudhya śādvale

muktvā śikyāni bubhujuḥ samaṁ bhagavatā mudā

TRANSLATION

Accepting Lord Kṛṣṇa's proposal, the cowherd boys allowed the calves to drink water from the river and then tied them to trees where there was green, tender grass. Then the boys opened their baskets of food and began eating with Kṛṣṇa in great transcendental pleasure.

COMMENTARY

The boys tied the calves to trees in a field full of tender green grass (*śādvale*). This means the calves were led to the field but because of greed for that grass, they would not go anywhere else.

|| 10.13.8 ||

kṛṣṇasya viṣvak puru-rāji-maṇḍalair abhyānanāḥ phulla-dṛśo vrajārbhakāḥ

sahopaviṣṭā vipine virejuś chadā yathāmbhoruha-karṇikāyāḥ

TRANSLATION

Like the whorl of a lotus flower surrounded by its petals and leaves, Kṛṣṇa sat in the center, encircled by lines of His friends, who all looked very beautiful. Every one of them was trying to look forward toward Kṛṣṇa, thinking that Kṛṣṇa might look toward him. In this way they all enjoyed their lunch in the forest.

COMMENTARY

This verse describes the arrangement for the picnic. Kṛṣṇa sat in the center, encircled by lines of His friends. All the boys sat looking toward the center (*abhyānanā*) where Kṛṣṇa was sitting. It was due to love that all the cowherd boys wanted to face Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa fulfilled their desire by employing His *sarva saṅkalpatā śakti* to make His face and limbs appear in all directions at once. Thus each boy thought, "I am sitting in front

directly facing Kṛṣṇa. But the other boys are sitting at a distance with their backs or sides to Kṛṣṇa."

This pastime illustrates a Bhagavad-gītā verse (13.14): *sarvataḥ pāṇi-pādaṁ tat sarvato 'kṣi-śiro-mukham, sarvataḥ śrutimal loke*, "Everywhere are His hands and legs, His eyes, heads and faces, and He has ears everywhere. In this way the Supersoul exists, pervading everything."

Sahopaviṣṭa means the cowherd boys sat with no spaces between them. They sat in rows around Kṛṣṇa like the whorl of a lotus flower surrounded by its petals.

|| 10.13.9 ||

kecit puṣpair dalaiḥ kecit pallavair aṅkuraiḥ phalaiḥ

śigbhis tvagbhir dṛṣadbhiś ca bubhujuḥ kṛta-bhājanāḥ

TRANSLATION

Among the cowherd boys, some placed their lunch on flowers, some on leaves, fruits, or bunches of leaves, some actually in their baskets, some on the bark of trees and some on rocks. This is what the children imagined to be their plates as they ate their lunch.

COMMENTARY

For fun each boy made his lunch plate out of a different material such as flowers or leaves.

|| 10.13.10 ||

sarve mitho darśayantaḥ sva-sva-bhojya-ruciṁ pṛthak

hasanto hāsayantaś cā-bhyavajahruḥ saheśvarāḥ

TRANSLATION

All the cowherd boys enjoyed their lunch with Kṛṣṇa, showing one another the different tastes of the different varieties of preparations they had brought from home. Tasting one another's preparations, they began to laugh and make one another laugh.

COMMENTARY

The boys would taste a little of the different items brought from their homes and then call out to their friends: "O *sakhā*, Kṛṣṇa! Śrīdāmā! Subala! See how tasty my food is!" Kṛṣṇa and the boys would then taste one another's food and laugh. This is the meaning *ruciṁ darśayantah*.

Without being seen by anyone one clever boy stuffed some jasmine flowers inside a *samosā* and said, "O friends, please taste this nice *samosā*!" Believing his statement, a boy took the *samosā* and ate it. When he started making faces due to the bitter taste, the giver laughed and the receiver laughed too. "*Ca*" indicates that afterwards the giver would get playfully beaten and run away.

|| 10.13.11 ||

bibhrad veṇuṁ jaṭhara-paṭayoḥ śṛṅga-vetre ca kakṣe

vāme pāṇau masṛṇa-kavalaṁ tat-phalāny aṅgulīṣu

tiṣṭhan madhye sva-parisuhṛdo hāsayan narmabhiḥ svaiḥ

svarge loke miṣati bubhuje yajña-bhug bāla-keliḥ

TRANSLATION

Kṛṣṇa is yajña-bhuk—that is, He eats only offerings of yajña—but to exhibit His childhood pastimes, He now sat with His flute tucked between His waist and His tight cloth on His right side and with His horn bugle and cow-driving stick on His left. Holding in His hand a very nice preparation of yogurt and rice, with pieces of suitable fruit between His fingers, He sat like the whorl of a lotus flower, looking forward toward all His friends, personally joking with them and creating jubilant laughter among them as He ate. At that time, the denizens of heaven were watching, struck with wonder at how the Personality of Godhead, who eats only in yajña, was now eating with His friends in the forest.

COMMENTARY

This verse describes the outstanding qualities of Kṛṣṇa eating with His friends. Kṛṣṇa sat with His flute tucked between His waist and His tight cloth on His right side, and His horn and cow-driving stick on His left. In His left hand Kṛṣṇa held a big lump of yogurt rice. In between His fingers Kṛṣṇa held small pieces of lemon and *amla* pickle to mix with the rice. Or the words can mean that Kṛṣṇa held a lump of rice in His left hand, and then took small amounts with His right hand in order to eat. The cowherd boys sat in a circle facing Kṛṣṇa and chattered as they ate.

Kṛṣṇa addressed a buzzing bumblebee, “O bee, why are you flying near My face? Go to Madhumaṇgala who is just before you and get a drink.” Madhumaṇgala replied, “Hey *sakhā*! Do You want the bee to bite me? Hey bee, are you not afraid of killing a *brāhmaṇa*?” Another boy exclaimed, “Look at that band of wild monkeys! Though they are hungry and watching us, the boys are eating peacefully. Hey monkeys! Approach stealthily so they don’t see you and then steal their food.”

Kṛṣṇa’s *sarva saṅkalpa śakti* and *līlā-śakti* then fulfilled His wish: “O Lord! If You want some obstacle during this lunch for some amusement, then we will go and bring Brahmā.”

The celestial residents watched in astonishment at how Kṛṣṇa, who eats only oblations of ghee purified by *mantra* and offered in sacrifice (*yajña bhuk*), was now playing like an ordinary child (*bāla keli*). Kṛṣṇa was scolding or praising His friends, and giving and taking half eaten food with them in the forest.

|| 10.13.12 ||

bhārataivaṁ vatsa-peṣu bhuñjāneṣv acyutātmasu

vatsās tv antar-vane dūraṁ viviśus tṛṇa-lobhitāḥ

TRANSLATION

O Mahārāja Parīkṣit, while the cowherd boys, who knew nothing within the core of their hearts but Kṛṣṇa, were thus engaged in eating their lunch in the forest, the calves went far away, deep into the forest, being allured by green grass.

|| 10.13.13 ||

tān dṛṣṭvā bhaya-santrastān ūce kṛṣṇo ’sya bhī-bhayam

mitrāṇy āśān mā viramate-hāneṣye vatsakān aham

TRANSLATION

When Kṛṣṇa saw that His friends the cowherd boys were frightened, He, the fierce controller even of fear itself, said, just to mitigate their fear, “My dear friends, do not stop eating. I shall bring your calves back to this spot by personally going after them Myself.”

COMMENTARY

When Kṛṣṇa saw that the cowherd boys were frightened over losing sight of their calves, He, who gives fear to fear personified (*asya bhībhayam*), spoke affectionately, "O friends, do not stop eating (*asanat*). I shall go and personally bring your calves back to this spot."

|| 10.13.14 ||

ity uktvādri-darī-kuñja-gahvareṣv ātma-vatsakān

vicinvan bhagavān kṛṣṇaḥ sapāṇi-kavalo yayau

TRANSLATION

"Let Me go and search for the calves," Kṛṣṇa said. "Don't disturb your enjoyment." Then, carrying His yogurt and rice in His hand, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, immediately went out to search for the calves of His friends. To please His friends, He began searching in all the mountains, mountain caves, bushes and narrow passages.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa went out of the search for the calves while holding a lump of yogurt rice in His hand (*sa pāṇi kavala*) to eat.

|| 10.13.15 ||

ambhojanma-janis tad-antara-gato māyārbhakasyeśitur

draṣṭuṁ mañju mahitvam anyad api tad-vatsān ito vatsapān

nītvānyatra kurūdvahāntaradadhāt khe 'vasthito yaḥ purā

dṛṣṭvāghāsura-mokṣaṇaṁ prabhavataḥ prāptaḥ paraṁ vismayam

TRANSLATION

O Mahārāja Parīkṣit, Brahmā, who resides in the higher planetary system in the sky, had observed the activities of the most powerful Kṛṣṇa in killing and delivering Aghāsura, and he was astonished. Now that same Brahmā wanted to show some of his own power and see the power of Kṛṣṇa, who was engaged in His childhood pastimes, playing as if with ordinary cowherd boys. Therefore, in Kṛṣṇa's absence, Brahmā took all the boys and calves to another place. Thus he became entangled, for in the very near future he would see how powerful Kṛṣṇa was.

COMMENTARY

Brahmā is addressed as "*ambho janma jani*" one who is born from the lotus. This indicates that Brahmā, though a living being, has a material birth. The hint is here given that Brahmā was so deluded by the material energy that he wanted to test Kṛṣṇa, who is the very source of *mahāmāyā*. One should not claim that Brahmā's power of illusion could actually exert influence over omniscient Kṛṣṇa and His dear cowherd boys, because a later verse says "*vatsan pulinam aninya*" (as before Kṛṣṇa took the calves to the river bank). Kṛṣṇa's *līlā-śakti* allowed Pūtanā to bewilder Yaśodā and Kṛṣṇa in order to produce *vismaya rasa* (astonishment) in the Lord's transcendental pastimes. Pūtanā could have never caused such bewilderment on her own. Brahmā's power of illusion put the boys to sleep, but this was allowed only for the purpose of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. In actuality the cowherd boys were put to sleep by Kṛṣṇa's *yogamāyā* potency. This can be understood from the later statement: *kṛṣṇa māyā hatatmanam*, "the cowherd boys were bewildered by Kṛṣṇa's *māyā*."

One should not claim that after being bewildered by Kṛṣṇa the boys were taken somewhere else by Brahmā, because Brahmā later said, "These boys are not sleeping by my *māyā*. Where did they come from?"

Śukadeva says after this that Brahmā could not understand which boys were produced by Kṛṣṇa and which were created by the external energy. Śukadeva would not describe the real cowherd boys as being created by the external energy. It is proper to say that Brahmā had stolen some other forms of boys created by the external energy. After seeing the killing of Aghāsura, Brahmā wanted to see more of Kṛṣṇa's powers, and therefore came to this spot (*tad antargataḥ*). Brahmā removed the cowherd boys and calves from the bank of the Yamunā, hid them elsewhere (*itaḥ*) and then disappeared. The boys and calves that Brahmā stole were created by *māyā*. Since that *māyā* arises from the Lord's *māyā*, one could say that everything was under the Lord's *māyā*. Bewildered by the Lord's energy, Brahmā stole the calves and boys created by *māyā* in order to see Kṛṣṇa's powers. Brahmā was thinking, "When I steal the boys and calves will Kṛṣṇa show some power and another wonderful pastime? Will He search and find the cows Himself or come to me and pray to get them back? Or will He not be able to understand anything?" Such thoughts were possible only because Brahmā was bewildered by the Lord's energy. Thus when Brahmā desired to steal the boys and calves, *yogamāyā* hid the real boys and calves and *mahāmāyā* instantly produced exact replicas for Brahmā to steal.

Prabhavata means from Kṛṣṇa. Being astonished upon seeing Kṛṣṇa's deliverance of Aghāsura, Brahmā came there.

|| 10.13.16 ||

tato vatsān adṛṣṭvaitya puline 'pi ca vatsapān

ubhāv api vane kṛṣṇo vicikāya samantataḥ

TRANSLATION

Thereafter, when Kṛṣṇa was unable to find the calves, He returned to the bank of the river, but there He was also unable to see the cowherd boys. Thus He began to search for both the calves and the boys, as if He could not understand what had happened.

COMMENTARY

The phrase “not seeing the calves, Kṛṣṇa returned,” means it was an appearance of not seeing them, for Kṛṣṇa knew exactly where they were. Kṛṣṇa did this to make Brahmā believe that he could bewilder anyone including Bhāgavan. Then Kṛṣṇa began looking for the boys and calves. Playing the part of a distressed actor, Kṛṣṇa appeared to be looking for them. Later in verse sixty-one it says, “Brahmā saw Kṛṣṇa, the actor (*nāṭyam*) in the form of a cowherdboy.”

|| 10.13.17 ||

kvāpy adṛṣṭvāntar-vipine vatsān pālāṁś ca viśva-vit

sarvaṁ vidhi-kṛtaṁ kṛṣṇaḥ sahasāvajagāma ha

TRANSLATION

When Kṛṣṇa was unable to find the calves and their caretakers, the cowherd boys, anywhere in the forest, He could suddenly understand that this was the work of Lord Brahmā.

COMMENTARY

This verse shows why Kṛṣṇa began searching further. Though Kṛṣṇa is omniscient, He did not see the calves in any fields nor did He see the boys on the banks of the Yamunā, so He began searching for them. Did Kṛṣṇa understand the theft at the time of stealing, after the theft or after looking for some time? Without having to think, Kṛṣṇa understood immediately (*sahasa*) at the time of the theft that Brahmā had done it.

|| 10.13.18 ||

tataḥ kṛṣṇo mudaṁ kartuṁ tan-mātṝṇāṁ ca kasya ca

ubhayāyitam ātmānaṁ cakre viśva-kṛd īśvaraḥ

TRANSLATION

Thereafter, just to create pleasure both for Brahmā and for the mothers of the calves and cowherd boys, Kṛṣṇa, the creator of the entire cosmic manifestation, expanded Himself as calves and boys.

COMMENTARY

While Brahmā, believing that he had bewildered Kṛṣṇa, was being mystified by the Lord's energy, Kṛṣṇa along with His calves and boyfriends returned home and began performing His usual pastimes such as eating, as if they were never bewildered by Brahmā. This is not at all astonishing. In order to show His ability to bewilder everyone including Balarāma; to fulfill the desires of the *gopas* and *gopīs* to have Kṛṣṇa as their own son; to bewilder Brahmā and throw him into the ocean of dismay; to show Brahmā thousands of forms of Vāsudeva, the object of his devotion, after having taught him the *Bhāgavatam*, Kṛṣṇa took the form of all the calves and boys.

To give bliss to Lord Brahmā (*ka*) and the mothers, Kṛṣṇa expanded (*ubhayāyitam*) Himself into both the calves and boys. Kṛṣṇa could do this because He is the master of the *mahat-tattva* and the creator of the entire cosmic manifestation (*viśvakṛt īśvara*).

|| 10.13.19 ||

yāvad vatsapa-vatsakālpaka-vapur yāvat karāṅghry-ādikaṁ

yāvad yaṣṭi-viṣāṇa-veṇu-dala-śig yāvad vibhūṣāmbaram

yāvac chīla-guṇābhidhākṛti-vayo yāvad vihārādikaṁ

sarvaṁ viṣṇumayaṁ giro 'ṅga-vad ajaḥ sarva-svarūpo babhau

TRANSLATION

By His Vāsudeva feature, Kṛṣṇa simultaneously expanded Himself into the exact number of missing cowherd boys and calves, with their exact bodily features, their particular types of hands, legs and other limbs, their sticks, bugles and flutes, their lunch bags, their particular types of dress and ornaments placed in various ways, their names, ages and forms, and their special activities and characteristics. By expanding Himself in this way, beautiful Kṛṣṇa proved the statement samagra-jagad viṣṇumayam: "Lord Viṣṇu is all-pervading."

COMMENTARY

This is a more elaborate description of the expanded forms of the calves and boys. It is in the singular because it is describing the class (*jati*). The expanded cowherd boys had very small bodies just like the original boys (*yāvat*). They remembered their previous activities and how they acted (*vihārādikam*) in relation to their parents. Kṛṣṇa is addressed as *ajaḥ* unborn, but it also stands for *ajanya*, an unfavorable portent to be feared (by Brahmā). Kṛṣṇa is the original form of all the forms (*sarva svarūpa*), and He is the embodied form of the statement *sarvaṁ viṣṇumayam jagat*, the whole universe is Viṣṇu.

|| 10.13.20 ||

svayam ātmātma-govatsān prativāryātma-vatsapaiḥ

krīḍann ātma-vihāraiś ca sarvātmā prāviśad vrajam

TRANSLATION

Now expanding Himself so as to appear as all the calves and cowherd boys, all of them as they were, and at the same time appear as their leader, Kṛṣṇa entered Vrajabhūmi, the land of His father, Nanda Mahārāja, just as He usually did while enjoying their company.

COMMENTARY

Five verses describe how Kṛṣṇa continued His usual program of enjoying pastimes in the morning, noon, and evening in the village exactly as before. How did Kṛṣṇa, the soul of all (*sarvātma*), enter Vraja? He entered as *svayam ātmā*, as Himself (the subject), and brought back the calves (the object), who were also Himself (*ātma govatsān*), along with the cowherd boys (the means), who were Himself (*ātma vatsapaiḥ*), and played with other boys who were Himself.

The boys would sit on the same bank of the river and eat, the calves would herd in the green meadows, and Kṛṣṇa would wander from forest to forest searching for the calves. In this way, one moment extended for a whole year with Kṛṣṇa acting as everyone. Yet it was unnoticed by all. Kṛṣṇa, the boys and their calves wandered everyday in Vraja enjoying different pastimes untouched by the rain, wind or sun. By the power of Kṛṣṇa's *acintya-śakti* even Baladeva could not detect the difference. After his illusion was ended, Brahmā saw that same Kṛṣṇa with a stick and a lump of yogurt rice in His hand. Brahmā then offered prayers in all humility.

|| 10.13.21 ||

tat-tad-vatsān pṛthaṅ nītvā tat-tad-goṣṭhe niveśya saḥ

tat-tad-ātmābhavad rājaṁs tat-tat-sadma praviṣṭavān

TRANSLATION

O Mahārāja Parīkṣit, Kṛṣṇa, who had divided Himself as different calves and also as different cowherd boys, entered different cow sheds as the calves and then different homes as different boys.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa, playing the role of each calf and cowherd boy (*tat tad ātma*), herded each calf into its respective cow shed. In His expanded forms as Śrīdāmā, Sudāmā, Subala and other boys, Kṛṣṇa entered their respective houses.

|| 10.13.22 ||

tan-mātaro veṇu-rava-tvarotthitā

utthāpya dorbhiḥ parirabhya nirbharam

sneha-snuta-stanya-payaḥ-sudhāsavaṁ

matvā paraṁ brahma sutān apāyayan

TRANSLATION

The mothers of the boys, upon hearing the sounds of the flutes and bugles being played by their sons, immediately rose from their household tasks, lifted their boys onto their laps, embraced them with both arms and began to feed them with their breast milk, which flowed forth because of extreme love specifically for Kṛṣṇa. Actually Kṛṣṇa is everything, but at that time, expressing extreme love and affection, they took special pleasure in feeding Kṛṣṇa, the ParaBrahman, and Kṛṣṇa drank the milk from His respective mothers as if it were a nectarean beverage.

COMMENTARY

“O will we ever be like mother Yaśodā and have Kṛṣṇa as our child?” This verse describes how Kṛṣṇa fulfilled this desire of the elderly *gopīs* without their knowledge. Treating the Kṛṣṇa expansions just like their sons, the mothers put them on their laps and fed their breast milk to them. The word “*uduhya*” is sometimes found in place of

utthāpya. The mothers held their children more affectionately than before, and due to this increased affection more milk flowed (*nirbharam*: excessively) from their breasts than before.

Kṛṣṇa, the Parabraḥman, drank the milk from His respective mothers as if it were the sweetest nectar because that milk was filled with their intense motherly affection. The word *sudhāsavaṁ* indicates that to Kṛṣṇa their breast milk tasted like nectar (*sudha*), and since it was saturated with their *prema* it had the intoxicating effect of wine (*asavam*) so it filled Kṛṣṇa with joy. The elderly *gopīs*' inner ambition was to have Kṛṣṇa as their son, so the Lord fulfilled it in this pastime of bewildering Brahmā. Thus for one year Kṛṣṇa enjoyed the special transcendental pleasure created by *yogamāyā* between all the mothers and Himself. That is why Brahmā said, "In great pleasure they drank the nectar (*payaḥ-sudhāsavam*) from their mothers' breasts."

|| 10.13.23 ||

tato nṛponmardana-majja-lepanā-laṅkāra-rakṣā-tilakāśanādibhiḥ

saṁlālitaḥ svācaritaiḥ praharṣayan sāyaṁ gato yāma-yamena mādhavaḥ

TRANSLATION

Thereafter, O Mahārāja Parīkṣit, as required according to the scheduled round of His pastimes, Kṛṣṇa returned in the evening, entered the house of each of the cowherd boys, and engaged exactly like the former boys, thus enlivening their mothers with transcendental pleasure. The mothers took care of the boys by massaging them with oil, bathing them, smearing their bodies with sandalwood pulp, decorating them with ornaments, chanting protective mantras, decorating their bodies with tilaka and giving them food. In this way, the mothers served Kṛṣṇa personally.

COMMENTARY

According to the scheduled round (*yāma yamena*) of His pastimes, Kṛṣṇa returned in the evening, and entered the house of each cowherd boy. The word Mādhava refers to Kṛṣṇa and His expansions as cowherd boys. The mothers took care of the boys by massaging fragrant oil on their bodies (*unmardana*), bathing them (*majja*), smearing their bodies with sandalwood pulp, ornamenting them, chanting protective *mantras*, decorating their bodies with tilaka and feeding them sumptuously.

|| 10.13.24 ||

gāvas tato goṣṭham upetya satvaraṁ huṅkāra-ghoṣaiḥ parihūta-saṅgatān

svakān svakān vatsatarān apāyayan muhur lihantyaḥ sravad audhasaṁ payaḥ

TRANSLATION

Thereafter, all the cows entered their different sheds and began mooing loudly, calling for their respective calves. When the calves arrived, the mothers began licking the calves' bodies again and again and profusely feeding them with the milk flowing from their milk bags.

COMMENTARY

The bewilderment of the cows was similar to that of the mothers. First the cows entered their sheds and began mooing loudly to call for their respective calves. When the calves arrived, the mothers began continuously licking their bodies and feeding them with a constant flow of milk from their milk bags. This hints that their affection was more than before.

|| 10.13.25 ||

go-gopīnāṁ mātṛtāsminn āsīt snehardhikāṁ vinā

purovad āsv api hares tokatā māyayā vinā

TRANSLATION

Previously, from the very beginning, the gopīs had motherly affection for Kṛṣṇa. Indeed, their affection for Kṛṣṇa exceeded even their affection for their own sons. In displaying their affection, they had thus distinguished between Kṛṣṇa and their sons, but now that distinction disappeared.

COMMENTARY

From the very beginning, the *gopīs* and cows has more motherly affection for Kṛṣṇa than their own off-spring. But now that Kṛṣṇa had become their sons and calves, their love for their sons and calves became equal to what they previously had for Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa's affection as a child toward the mothers was the same as before, but from the commencement of the *brahma-vimohana-līlā*, Kṛṣṇa became their sons in actuality (*māyayā vinā*). It may be objected that Kṛṣṇa in the form of the cowherd boys should have had the same affection for their mothers as their actual sons, since a previous verse stated that Kṛṣṇa took up exactly the character, dress, form and age as each cowherd boy.

Though Kṛṣṇa is the supreme independent controller, and everyone from Brahmā to even His personal expansions is dependent on Him, He is dependent on prema and

controlled by *prema*. *Prema* is not dependent on Him. Kṛṣṇa cannot control or restrict *prema*.

Śrīdhara Swami says, “This irregularity is difficult to prevent in Kṛṣṇa.” Such uncontrollable *prema* was in the hearts of the mothers towards Kṛṣṇa in the form of their sons. Thus Kṛṣṇa in the form of their sons forgot His powers as God. Since He assumed the role of their sons, He remained dependent on them, like a commander next to the king. One should not say that such dependence on love is a fault; rather it is Kṛṣṇa’s ornament. As the living entity’s dependence on *māyā* is the cause of his sorrow, so Kṛṣṇa’s dependence on *prema* is the cause of ever-increasing bliss. This is the realization of the great devotees.

|| 10.13.26 ||

vrajaukasāṁ sva-tokeṣu sneha-vally ābdam anvaham

śanair niḥsīma vavṛdhe yathā kṛṣṇe tv apūrvavat

TRANSLATION

Although the inhabitants of Vrajabhūmi, the cowherd men and cowherd women, previously had more affection for Kṛṣṇa than for their own children, now, for one year, their affection for their own sons continuously increased, for Kṛṣṇa had now become their sons. There was no limit to the increment of their affection for their sons, who were now Kṛṣṇa. Every day they found new inspiration for loving their children as much as they loved Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

Previously the Vrajavāsīs had more love for Kṛṣṇa than for their own children. Now for one year the affection of the mothers for their sons, who were actually Kṛṣṇa, grew like a creeper more and more. Their affection for Kṛṣṇa became every increasingly fresh. Here, the word Kṛṣṇa should be understood to be repeated again, though it is mentioned only once in the verse.

Why did the mothers’ love for Kṛṣṇa increase even more? Because Kṛṣṇa is the *aṁśi*, the original possessor of all power and beauty, and His expansions as the cowherd boys are *aṁśa* in relation to His beauty and other qualities. Therefore, the sentence could read as follows. “As much as they had love for Kṛṣṇa previously (*yatha Kṛṣṇa vavṛdhe*), their love for their sons increased to that degree (*sva tokeṣu vavṛdhe*). But their love for Kṛṣṇa personally now increased even more (*krsne tu apūrvavat vavṛdhe*). Or the sentence can read: “As much as their love for their sons increased (*yatha sva tokeṣu vavṛdhe*), so their

love for Kṛṣṇa increased even more (*kṛṣṇa tu apūrvavat vavṛdhe*). In this interpretation the word Kṛṣṇa does not need repetition.

|| 10.13.27 ||

ittham ātmātmanātmānaṁ vatsa-pāla-miṣeṇa saḥ

pālayan vatsapo varṣaṁ cikrīḍe vana-goṣṭhayoḥ

TRANSLATION

In this way, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, having Himself become the cowherd boys and groups of calves, maintained Himself by Himself. Thus He continued His pastimes, both in Vṛndāvana and in the forest, for one year.

COMMENTARY

Thus Kṛṣṇa Himself (*ātma*) became the cowherd boys and calves (*vatsa pāla miṣeṇa*), and sustained Himself by Himself. Thus Kṛṣṇa continued His pastimes for one year, both in the forest and in the fields.

|| 10.13.28 ||

ekadā cārayan vatsān sa-rāmo vanam āviśat

pañca-ṣāsu tri-yāmāsu hāyanāpūraṇīṣv ajaḥ

TRANSLATION

One day, five or six nights before the completion of the year, Kṛṣṇa, tending the calves, entered the forest along with Balarāma.

COMMENTARY

This explains how Baladeva entered the forest with Kṛṣṇa five or six nights before the completion of one year. Three *yāmās* equal one night.

|| 10.13.29 ||

tato vidūrāc carato gāvo vatsān upavrajam

govardhanādri-śirasi carantyo dadṛśus tṛṇam

TRANSLATION

Thereafter, while pasturing atop Govardhana Hill, the cows looked down to find some green grass and saw their calves pasturing near Vṛndāvana, not very far away.

COMMENTARY

While grazing atop Govardhana Hill, the cows looked down to find some tender green grass (*tṛṇam carantaḥ*) and saw their calves pasturing nearby in Vraja.

|| 10.13.30 ||

dṛṣṭvātha tat-sneha-vaśo 'smṛtātmā sa go-vrajo 'tyātmapa-durga-mārgaḥ

dvi-pāt kakud-grīva udāsya-puccho 'gād dhuṅkṛtair āsru-payā javena

TRANSLATION

When the cows saw their own calves from the top of Govardhana Hill, they forgot themselves and their caretakers because of increased affection, and although the path was very rough, they ran toward their calves with great anxiety, each running as if with one pair of legs. Their milk bags full and flowing with milk, their heads and tails raised, and their humps moving with their necks, they ran forcefully until they reached their calves to feed them.

COMMENTARY

When the cows saw their own calves from the top of Govardhana Hill, they forgot themselves and ran off. Ignoring their caretakers and the rough pathway, the cows stretched their necks out in longing and ran as if with one pair of legs. Their heads and tails were raised, and their tears and milk flowed in streams.

|| 10.13.31 ||

sametya gāvo 'dho vatsān vatsavatyo 'py apāyayan

gilantya iva cāṅgāni lihantyaḥ svaudhasaṁ payaḥ

TRANSLATION

The cows had given birth to new calves, but while coming down from Govardhana Hill, the cows, because of increased affection for the older calves, allowed the older calves to drink milk from their milk bags and then began licking the calves' bodies in anxiety, as if wanting to swallow them.

COMMENTARY

Although the cows had given birth to new calves, they had more affection for the older calves. Thus they came down from Govardhana Hill to feed the older calves the milk pouring from their udders (*svaudhasaṁ payaḥ*). In great anxiety they repeatedly licked the calves' bodies as if wanting to swallow them.

|| 10.13.32 ||

gopās tad-rodhanāyāsa-maughya-lajjoru-manyunā

durgādhva-kṛcchrato 'bhyetya go-vatsair dadṛśuḥ sutān

TRANSLATION

The cowherd men, having been unable to check the cows from going to their calves, felt simultaneously ashamed and angry. They crossed the rough road with great difficulty, but when they came down and saw their own sons, they were overwhelmed by great affection.

COMMENTARY

The cowherd men tried to stop the cows with sticks, but failing to check the cows, they felt simultaneously ashamed and angry. With great difficulty they ran down the rough path, but when they saw their sons with the calves they too were overwhelmed with affection.

|| 10.13.33 ||

tad-īkṣaṇotprema-rasāplutāśayā jātānurāgā gata-manyavo 'rbhakān

uduhya dorbhiḥ parirabhya mūrdhani ghrāṇair avāpuḥ paramāṁ mudaṁ te

TRANSLATION

At that time, all the thoughts of the cowherd men merged in the mellow of paternal love, which was aroused by the sight of their sons. Experiencing a great attraction, their anger completely disappearing, they lifted their sons, embraced them in their arms and enjoyed the highest pleasure by smelling their sons' heads.

COMMENTARY

Oh ignorant men! Why were the cows drawn towards their calves? The elders wanted to scold the cows, but by glancing at their children, they became filled with parental love, *vātsalya-prema*. Experiencing the fifth stage of *prema* (*anurāgāḥ*) the cowherd men relished intense attraction and pleasure, and thus completely forgot their anger.

|| 10.13.34 ||

tataḥ pravayaso gopās tokāśleṣa-sunirvṛtāḥ

kṛcchrāc chanair apagatās tad-anusmṛty-udaśravaḥ

TRANSLATION

Thereafter the elderly cowherd men, having obtained great feeling from embracing their sons, gradually and with great difficulty and reluctance ceased embracing them and returned to the forest. But as the men remembered their sons, tears began to roll down from their eyes.

COMMENTARY

With great difficulty (*kṛcchrāc*) the elderly cowherd men (*pravayaso*) stopped embracing (*apagatā*) their children and returned to the forest. As the men remembered their sons, tears flowed from their eyes (*uda śrava*).

|| 10.13.35 ||

vrajasya rāmaḥ premardher vīkṣyautkaṇṭhyam anukṣaṇam

mukta-staneṣv apatyeṣv apy ahetu-vid acintayat

TRANSLATION

Because of an increase of affection, the cows had constant attachment even to those calves that were grown up and had stopped sucking milk from their

mothers. When Baladeva saw this attachment, He was unable to understand the reason for it, and thus He began to consider as follows.

COMMENTARY

Because of an increase of *prema* the cows had great attachment (*utkaṇṭhyam*) even to those calves that were grown up and had stopped sucking milk from their mothers. Seeing this inexplicable (*ahetuvit*) situation, Baladeva began to think. From the day after the bewilderment of Brahmā, all the cows would ignore their newly born calves at the time of milking and feed their calves, which had stopped taking milk from their udders. Why did Balarāma realize this now, after seeing it for so many days, and why didn't the other cowherd men even notice this? It was because they were all covered by *yogamāyā* from the day of the *brahma-vimohana-līlā*. Therefore, even though they saw the strange behavior of the cows, Baladeva, the *gopīs* and the *gopas* did not think to investigate it.

Baladeva is the elder brother of the cause of the universe, and His dear friend, so Kṛṣṇa should not have deceived Him. Though Kṛṣṇa should have revealed everything to Baladeva before this, He did not because He did not want Balarāma to suffer any separation from Śrīdāmā and His other friends for the period of a year. Kṛṣṇa Himself did not suffer from any separation because He was close to them in an expanded form that searched for their calves. Balarāma did not appear in any expanded form during this pastime. Then, after a year passed, when the Lord desired, *yogamāyā* gradually withdrew her cover from Balarāma. It was done gradually so that Baladeva could take the viewpoint of the devotee, and also to immerse Him in the ocean of the Lord's power.

|| 10.13.36 ||

kim etad adbhutam iva vāsudeve 'khilātmani

vrajasya sātmanas tokeṣv apūrvaṁ prema vardhate

TRANSLATION

What is this wonderful phenomenon? The affection of all the inhabitants of Vraja, including Me, toward these boys and calves is increasing as never before, just like our affection for Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supersoul of all living entities.

COMMENTARY

As *yogamāyā* relaxed the first part of her influence, Balarāma thought about the wonders He was seeing: "It astonishes Me how the mothers have the same love for their sons as they previously had for Kṛṣṇa?" It was also amazing how Balarāma himself was experiencing the same love He feels for Kṛṣṇa upon seeing those boys.

|| 10.13.37 ||

keyaṁ vā kuta āyātā daivī vā nāry utāsurī

prāyo māyāstu me bhartur nānyā me 'pi vimohinī

TRANSLATION

Who is this mystic power, and where has she come from? Is she a demigod or a demoness? She must be the illusory energy of My master, Lord Kṛṣṇa, for who else can bewilder Me?

COMMENTARY

As *yogamāyā* removed the second part of her influence, Balarāma thought for a moment about this, and invoked His power of omniscience to understand the cause of His surprise. Balarāma considered: "It is definitely a display of mystic power or *māyā*. But what kind of *māyā* and who caused it? Is it the *daivī-māyā* of the demigods like Brahmā appearing as boys and calves to test their ability to attract us to them? Are these boys not really Śrīdāmā and others? Is it *nārī-māyā* created by the some sages, who are testing their knowledge by assuming the forms of the boys and calves? Is it some *rākṣasī-māyā* employed by the demons like Kaṁsa, who failing to kill us by their strength, have resorted to some trick to kill us by disguising themselves as the boys and calves?"

As the third portion of *yogamāyā* dissolved, Balarāma again considered: "The mystical change must have been caused by the *yogamāyā* potency of my master Kṛṣṇa. Though other potencies cannot bewilder Me, even I cannot check the power of Kṛṣṇa's *yogamāyā*, which is filled with pure knowledge. On the other hand, the *mahāmāyā* of My expansion Mahā-Viṣṇu, who creates the *mahat-tattva*, easily bewilders Brahmā and all others."

|| 10.13.38 ||

iti sañcintya dāśārho vatsān sa-vayasān api

sarvān ācaṣṭa vaikuṇṭhaṁ cakṣuṣā vayunena saḥ

TRANSLATION

Thinking in this way, Lord Balarāma was able to see, with the eye of transcendental knowledge, that all these calves and Kṛṣṇa's friends were expansions of the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

Thinking thus, Balarāma tried to understand it by the eye of transcendental knowledge (*vayunena cakṣuṣā*). By Kṛṣṇa's will the fourth portion of *yogamāyā* departed, and Balarāma was able to see that all the boys and calves were expansions of Kṛṣṇa's transcendental form.

|| 10.13.39 ||

naite sureśā ṛṣayo na caite

tvam eva bhāsīśa bhid-āśraye 'pi

sarvaṁ pṛthak tvaṁ nigamāt kathaṁ vadety
uktena vṛttaṁ prabhuṇā balo 'vait

TRANSLATION

Lord Baladeva said, "O supreme controller! These boys are not great demigods, as I previously thought. Nor are these calves great sages like Nārada. Now I can see that You alone are manifesting Yourself in all varieties of difference. Although one, You are existing in the different forms of the calves and boys. Please briefly explain this to Me." Having thus been requested by Lord Baladeva, Kṛṣṇa explained the whole situation, and Baladeva understood it.

COMMENTARY

Balarāma continued His thoughts: "Now, why did Kṛṣṇa become the calves and boys? Where has He hidden the real boys and calves? Because even after prolonged meditation one cannot perceive this matter, it should be understood that the cause is not *mahāmāyā*, but rather *yogamāyā*, Kṛṣṇa's transcendental spiritual power. Kṛṣṇa's *yogamāyā* has such great power that even His personal expansions such as Nārāyaṇa, though omniscient and omnipresent, do not have any inherent understanding of this power." Mahāviṣṇu's stealing the sons of the Dvārakā *brāhmaṇa* is the proof given in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, Tenth Canto, chapter eighty-nine.

Thus Balarāma could understand all of this only after looking at Kṛṣṇa. With this intent the verse is spoken. Balarāma said, "It is not possible that the demigods, sages or the demons became the boys. Actually I see that all these boys and calves are You. Although one, please tell me why You are existing in the different forms of the calves and boys?"

Upon inquiring from Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma understood everything about the *brahma-vimohana-līlā*.

|| 10.13.40 ||

tāvad etyātmabhūr ātma- mānena truṭy-anehasā

purovad ābdaṁ krīḍantaṁ dadṛśe sa-kalaṁ harim

TRANSLATION

When Lord Brahmā returned after a moment of time had passed (according to his own measurement), he saw that although by human measurement a complete year had passed, Lord Kṛṣṇa, after all that time, was engaged just as before in playing with the boys and calves, who were His expansions.

COMMENTARY

After describing the bewilderment of the Vraja *gopas* and *gopīs*, the bewilderment of Brahmā is described. Due to fear, Brahmā, who is called *ātma bhū* (born directly from Hari), returned after one moment, even though one year of human time had elapsed. After all that time, Brahmā saw that Kṛṣṇa was playing with the boys and calves, who were actually His expansions. Baladeva, however, as in the previous year, was absent due to being kept home by his mother to perform auspicious rites on His birthday.

|| 10.13.41 ||

yāvanto gokule bālāḥ sa-vatsāḥ sarva eva hi

māyāśaye śayānā me nādyāpi punar utthitāḥ

TRANSLATION

Lord Brahmā thought: Whatever boys and calves there were in Gokula, I have kept them sleeping on the bed of my mystic potency, and to this very day they have not yet risen again.

|| 10.13.42 ||

ita ete 'tra kutratyā man-māyā-mohitetare

tāvanta eva tatrābdaṁ krīḍanto viṣṇunā samam

TRANSLATION

A similar number of boys and calves have been playing with Kṛṣṇa for one whole year, yet they are different from the ones illusioned by my mystic potency. Who are they? Where did they come from?

COMMENTARY

The doubts that arose in Brahmā after seeing this are described in two verses (41-42). Lord Brahmā thought: “Where have all these boys and calves come from? Are these the ones bewildered by my māyā? Or are they different boys and calves brought by Kṛṣṇa?”

Brahmā pointed with his forefinger as he thought, “Just a short distance from here the boys and calves are playing with Kṛṣṇa in the forest of Gokula. They are different from the ones I put to sleep by my mystic power. Where did these come from and who are they?”

|| 10.13.43 ||

evam eteṣu bhedeṣu ciraṁ dhyātvā sa ātma-bhūḥ

satyāḥ ke katare neti jñātuṁ neṣṭe kathañcana

TRANSLATION

Thus Lord Brahmā, thinking and thinking for a long time, tried to distinguish between those two sets of boys, who were each separately existing. He tried to understand who was real and who was not real, but he couldn’t understand at all.

COMMENTARY

In this way Brahmā was thinking and investigating for a long time. “Of the two groups, those bewildered by me and those playing here with Kṛṣṇa, which group is real and which is false? Are the sleeping ones bewildered by me the real ones or are they something created by Kṛṣṇa? Or are the ones playing in the distance the real ones or something created by Kṛṣṇa? Or are both merely creations of Kṛṣṇa? After I go to the cave and see that the boys and calves are still there, does Kṛṣṇa remove them and bring them here so that I come here and see them, and does Kṛṣṇa then take them from here and put them back in the cave? Whatever the case may be, I see two different groups in two different places at the same time. Thus I am confused.”

After meditating for some time, Brahmā thought, “I will use my power of omniscience to understand this.” But even then, after a long time in *samādhi*, Brahmā was still doubtful: “Of the two groups situated in two places, which is the real (*satyāḥ*) group created by the Lord, and which is the false one created by Māyādevī? I cannot understand at all.”

|| 10.13.44 ||

evaṁ sammohayan viṣṇuṁ vimohaṁ viśva-mohanam

svayaiva māyayājo ’pi svayam eva vimohitaḥ

TRANSLATION

Thus because Lord Brahmā wanted to mystify the all-pervading Lord Kṛṣṇa, who can never be mystified, but who, on the contrary, mystifies the entire universe, he himself was put into bewilderment by his own mystic power.

COMMENTARY

This verse describes how Brahmā fell into the whirlpool of bewilderment. Though Brahmā tried to mystify (*sammohayan*) Kṛṣṇa by stealing the boys and calves, he, though unborn (*ajaḥ*), was bewildered by using his energy (*svayā māyayā*) against the Lord. Brahmā was not bewildered by his own energy, which is the external meaning of the words *svayā māyayā*.

Vimohitaḥ here indicates that Brahmā was bewildered in a special way (*vi:visesena mohitaḥ*). The reason for this extreme bewilderment was Brahmā’s great offense in attempting to use his powers to mystify the Lord. One should not think that Brahmā was bewildered by his own *māyā*, because *māyā* does not have the power to bewilder its shelter. A later verse gives an example to illustrate this.

|| 10.13.45 ||

tamyāṁ tamovan naihāraṁ khadyotārcir ivāhani

mahatītara-māyaiśyaṁ nihanty ātmani yuñjataḥ

TRANSLATION

As the darkness of snow on a dark night and the light of a glowworm in the light of day have no value, the mystic power of an inferior person who tries to use it against a person of great power is unable to accomplish anything; instead, the power of that inferior person is diminished.

COMMENTARY

No type of mystic power can cover Kṛṣṇa, who is the controller of *mahāmāyā*. Rather, such an attempt shows the insignificance of the person displaying his mystic power before the Lord. This verse cites two examples to show this.

In the dense darkness of night, the darkness produced by snow has no meaning. Similarly, Brahmā's *māyā* could not cover the Lord, but rather Brahmā became insignificant in the presence of Kṛṣṇa's mystic power.

As the example of snow only attributes a little causality to Brahmā, another more satisfying example is given. A firefly appears very important at night, but in the daytime its glow has no value. Similarly, Brahmā can show his power in some places, but his power became condemned when he tried to spread it over the Lord. When one tries to defeat a superior power, one's own inferior power becomes destroyed.

|| 10.13.46 ||

tāvat sarve vatsa-pālāḥ paśyato 'jasya tat-kṣaṇāt

vyadṛśyanta ghana-śyāmāḥ pīta-kauśeya-vāsasaḥ

TRANSLATION

Then, while Lord Brahmā looked on, all the calves and the boys tending them immediately appeared to have complexions the color of bluish rainclouds and to be dressed in yellow silken garments.

COMMENTARY

(Verses 46-48) While Brahmā was contemplating these matters, he saw all the calves and cowherd boys (*vatsa pālāḥ*), but they gave no heed to him. They said, "O Brahmā, the unborn (*aja*) one, resident of Satyaloka. Verily (*satya*), you are a goat! [The word *aja* also means goat.] You create the universe by your intelligence. Now you want to bewilder us with your *māyā*. You have no idea at all who we are. Now we will show you! Look! Though we are all the calves grazing on Vṛndāvana's grass, and all the cowherd boys herding those calves,our real form is only one form."

Being endowed with spiritual vision, Brahmā was able to see (*vyadṛśyantah*) that all the calves and cowherd boys had immediately transformed into *viṣṇu-mūrtis* with four arms, having bluish complexions and wearing yellow garments. All the boys' chests were marked with the line of Laksmī (*śrīvatsa*). They had armbands (*angada*) on their upper arms, and Kaustubha jewels (*ratna*) on their necks. Their hands were ornamented with golden bracelets and their feet with bangles.

|| 10.13.47-48 ||

catur-bhujāḥ śaṅkha-cakra-gadā-rājīva-pāṇayaḥ

kirīṭinaḥ kuṇḍalino hāriṇo vana-mālinaḥ

śrīvatsāṅgada-do-ratna-kambu-kaṅkaṇa-pāṇayaḥ

nūpuraiḥ kaṭakair bhātāḥ kaṭi-sūtrāṅgulīyakaiḥ

TRANSLATION

All those personalities had four arms, holding conchshell, disc, mace and lotus flower in Their hands. They wore helmets on Their heads, earrings on Their ears and garlands of forest flowers around Their necks. On the upper portion of the right side of Their chests was the emblem of the goddess of fortune. Furthermore, They wore armlets on Their arms, the Kaustubha gem around Their necks, which were marked with three lines like a conchshell, and bracelets on Their wrists. With bangles on Their ankles, ornaments on Their feet, and sacred belts around Their waists, They all appeared very beautiful.

|| 10.13.49 ||

āṅghri-mastakam āpūrṇās tulasī-nava-dāmabhiḥ

komalaiḥ sarva-gātreṣu bhūri-puṇyavad-arpitaiḥ

TRANSLATION

Every part of Their bodies, from Their feet to the top of Their heads, was fully decorated with fresh, tender garlands of tulasī leaves offered by devotees engaged in worshiping the Lord by the greatest pious activities, namely hearing and chanting.

COMMENTARY

The phrase *bhūri puṇyavad arpitaiḥ* means “worshiping the Supreme Lord by hearing, chanting and remembering.”

|| 10.13.50 ||

candrikā-viśada-smeraiḥ sāruṇāpāṅga-vīkṣitaiḥ

svakārthānām iva rajaḥ-sattvābhyāṁ sraṣṭṛ-pālakāḥ

TRANSLATION

Those Viṣṇu forms, by Their pure smiling, which resembled the increasing light of the moon, and by the sidelong glances of Their reddish eyes, created and protected the desires of Their own devotees, as if by the modes of passion and goodness.

COMMENTARY

The brightness of the smiles of those Viṣṇu forms made the moon light lament. With the sidelong glances of Their reddish eyes they created and maintained the desires of their devotees. The phrase (*raja-sattvābhyāṁ*) means the Viṣṇu forms distributed mercy with the reddish (*rajas*) tint of their lotus eyes and the white (*sattva*) of their smiles.

|| 10.13.51 ||

ātmādi-stamba-paryantair mūrtimadbhiś carācaraiḥ

nṛtya-gītādy-anekārhaiḥ pṛthak pṛthag upāsitāḥ

TRANSLATION

All beings, both moving and nonmoving, from the four-headed Lord Brahmā down to the most insignificant living entity, had taken forms and were differently worshiping those viṣṇu-mūrtis, according to their respective capacities, with various means of worship, such as dancing and singing.

COMMENTARY

Brahmā saw that all beings from the four-headed Brahmā down to the grass were worshiping those *viṣṇu-mūrtis* with various means of worship, such as singing and dancing.

|| 10.13.52 ||

aṇimādyair mahimabhir ajādyābhir vibhūtibhiḥ

catur-viṁśatibhis tattvaiḥ parītā mahad-ādibhiḥ

TRANSLATION

All the viṣṇu-mūrtis were surrounded by the opulences, headed by aṇimā-siddhi; by the mystic potencies, headed by Ajā; and by the twenty-four elements for the creation of the material world, headed by the mahat-tattva.

COMMENTARY

All the *viṣṇu-mūrtis* were surrounded by opulences, headed by the eight mystic *siddhis*, and by the twenty four elements of creation starting with the *mahat-tattva*. In this enumeration of the twenty four elements, a distinction is made between *mahat-tattva*, which is the twenty-third element, and *sutra-tattva* (a state where the three modes are slightly manifested), which becomes the twenty third element instead of *mahat-tattva*. *Tattvaiḥ* means causes for creation of the material world.

|| 10.13.53 ||

kāla-svabhāva-saṁskāra-kāma-karma-guṇādibhiḥ

sva-mahi-dhvasta-mahibhir mūrtimadbhir upāsitāḥ

TRANSLATION

Then Lord Brahmā saw that kāla (the time factor), svabhāva (one's own nature by association), saṁskāra (reformation), kāma (desire), karma (fruitive activity) and the guṇas (the three modes of material nature), their own independence being completely subordinate to the potency of the Lord, had all taken forms and were also worshiping those viṣṇu-mūrtis.

COMMENTARY

The *viṣṇu-mūrtis* were being worshiped by time (*kāla*) and its assistants: one's own nature (*svabhāva*), reformation (*saṁskāra*), desire (*kāma*), fruitive activity (*karma*) and the three modes of material nature (*guṇas*). Their own independence, however, was completely subordinate to the potency of the Lord (*sva mahi dhvasta mahibhiḥ*). Time sets the three modes of nature in motion. *Svabhāva* is one's natural state formed by associating with the three modes of material nature. *Saṁskāra* is that which brings remembrance or revelation.

|| 10.13.54 ||

satya-jñānānantānanda-mātraika-rāsa-mūrtayaḥ

aspṛṣṭa-bhūri-māhātmyā api hy upaniṣad-dṛśām

TRANSLATION

The viṣṇu-mūrtis all had eternal, unlimited forms, full of knowledge and bliss and existing beyond the influence of time. Their great glory was not even to be touched by the jñānīs engaged in studying the Upaniṣads.

COMMENTARY

One should not think that all these forms were just a creation of the Lord's illusory energy. The boys and calves were all transformed into *viṣṇu-mūrtis* or Viṣṇu forms made of infinite truth, infinite knowledge and infinite bliss. Or the meaning can be: the calves and boys were the personification of the Vedic statement: *satyaṁ jñānam ānandaṁ brahmeti, ānandaṁ brahmano rūpam*, "Brahman is the Absolute Truth and complete bliss. Brahman is the form of bliss." (*Taittireya Upaniṣad* 2.1.3)

One may object that Vedāntists never say that Brahman has many forms and variations. But this verse states that the followers of the *Upaniṣads* (*upaniṣad dṛṣām*), however, cannot understand the varieties manifested by Brahman due to their lack of devotion, nor can they even touch the glory of these *viṣṇu-mūrtis*. This proves that Brahman and Paramātmā can actually be understood only through devotion as confirmed by Kṛṣṇa in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (11.14.21): *bhaktyāham ekayā grāhyaḥ*, "I am obtainable only by devotion." Śrī Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.55): *bhaktyā mām abhijānāti yāvān yaś cāsmi tattvataḥ*, "I am known as I am only by devotion."

The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (3.2.3) says:

> *na caksusa pasyati rupam asya yam evaiṣa vṛṇute*
>
> *tena labhyas tasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇute tanuṁ svām*
>
> "The Lord's form cannot be seen by material eyes. The Lord is attainable by one whom the Lord favors. To such a person He manifests His own form."

In the *Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad* (3.8), the Supreme is described as *āditya-varnam tamasah parastāt*, “He whose self-manifest form is luminous like the sun and transcendental to the darkness of ignorance.” *Ananda-mātram ajaraṁ purāṇam ekam santaṁ bahudhā dṛṣyamānam*: “The Supreme is blissful, with no tinge of un-happiness. Although He is the oldest, He never ages, and although one, He is experienced in different forms.” (*Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad* 4.4.19) The *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.40.7) states: *bahu-mūrty-eka-mūrtikam*, “You are the one Supreme Lord manifesting in multiple forms.”

Sarve nityāh śāśvatāś ca dehās tasya parātmanaḥ: “All the forms of that Supreme Person are eternal.” (*Mahā-varāha Purāṇa*)

Thus there are many statements in the *Śruti* and *Smṛti* revealing that Brahman definitely has transcendental form and qualities, which are visible to the eye of devotion by the mercy of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.13.55 ||

evaṁ sakṛd dadarśājaḥ para-brahmātmano ’khilān

yasya bhāsā sarvam idaṁ vibhāti sa-carācaram

TRANSLATION

Thus Lord Brahmā saw the Supreme Brahman, by whose energy this entire universe, with its moving and nonmoving living beings, is manifested. He also saw at the same time all the calves and boys as the Lord’s expansions.

COMMENTARY

Yasya refers to the Supreme Brahman.

|| 10.13.56 ||

tato ’tikutukodvṛtya-stimitaikādaśendriyaḥ

tad-dhāmnābhūd ajas tūṣṇīṁ pūr-devy-antīva putrikā

TRANSLATION

Then, by the power of the effulgence of those viṣṇu-mūrtis, Lord Brahmā, his eleven senses jolted by astonishment and stunned by transcendental bliss, became silent, just like a child’s clay doll in the presence of the village deity.

COMMENTARY

By the influence of those viṣṇu-mūrtis, Brahmā's eleven senses became jolted by astonishment and stunned by transcendental bliss. The word uddhṛta is sometimes substituted for udvṛtya. Overwhelmed by the effulgence of those viṣṇu-mūrtis, Brahmā fell silent and could not do or say anything, just like a child's clay doll in the presence of the village deity.

|| 10.13.57 ||

itīreśe 'tarkye nija-mahimani sva-pramitike

paratrājāto 'tan-nirāsana-mukha-brahmaka-mitau

anīśe 'pi draṣṭuṁ kim idam iti vā muhyati sati

cacchādājo jñātvā sapadi paramo 'jā-javanikām

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Brahman is beyond mental speculation, He is self-manifest, existing in His own bliss, and He is beyond the material energy. He is known by the crest jewels of the Vedas by refutation of irrelevant knowledge. Thus in relation to that Supreme Brahman, the Personality of Godhead, whose glory had been shown by the manifestation of all the four-armed forms of Viṣṇu, Lord Brahmā, the lord of Sarasvatī, was mystified. "What is this?" he thought, and then he was not even able to see. Lord Kṛṣṇa, understanding Brahmā's position, then at once removed the curtain of His yogamāyā.

COMMENTARY

Seeing that Brahmā could not realize whatever sweet glory He had shown him, and that Brahmā was not qualified to view any more of His endless unprecedented glories, Kṛṣṇa didn't show any more of His opulences. Even though Brahmā was highly learned and also the husband of the goddess of learning Sarasvatī, he said, "Oh, what an amazing thing I have seen." Then being mystified, he could no longer see those forms. Seeing this and knowing Brahmā's qualification to understand His powers, Kṛṣṇa immediately withdrew the curtain of yogamāyā (ajā javanikām) to make them disappear.

In other words, by the agency of *yogamāyā*, Kṛṣṇa covered the cowherd boys, the calves grazing on grass and Himself looking for the calves. Then Kṛṣṇa showed new forms of the same produced from Himself, each having four arms. Then He made that *yogamāyā* disappear. *Yogamāyā* is the potency by which Kṛṣṇa is sometimes manifest and sometimes not manifest. *Mahāmāyā*, on the other hand, is the potency which covers the

actual reality and displays something unreal. Therefore, in this verse the word *ajā* refers to *yogamāyā*.

What was the source of Brahmā's bewilderment? Brahmā was mystified by seeing Kṛṣṇa's opulence (*nija mahimani*). How is Lord Kṛṣṇa described in this verse? Kṛṣṇa is beyond logic (atarkye), self-manifest and blissful (*sva-pramitike*). If Kṛṣṇa does not personally reveal Himself, there is absolutely no means, not even by scriptural knowledge, to realize Him. Therefore Kṛṣṇa is beyond logic or argument. He is also beyond the material energy (*paratra ajātah*).

Kṛṣṇa is known (*mitau*) by the crest jewels of the Vedas, who define Brahman in terms of negation. The phrase *atan-nirāsana* means rejecting that which is irrelevant. The word atat means "that which is not a fact." In the *Brhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (5.8.8), Brahman is described as *asthūlam anaṇv ahrasvam adīrgham*, "that which is not large and not small, not short and not long." In other words, Brahman is defined in terms of negation by saying *neti neti*, "It is not this, it is not that." By that form Brahmā was bewildered.

|| 10.13.58 ||

tato 'rvāk pratilabdhākṣaḥ kaḥ paretavad utthitaḥ

kṛcchrād unmīlya vai dṛṣṭīr ācaṣṭedaṁ sahātmanā

TRANSLATION

Lord Brahmā's external consciousness then revived, and he stood up, just like a dead man coming back to life. Opening his eyes with great difficulty, he saw the universe, along with himself.

COMMENTARY

Brahmā returned to external consciousness and stood up, just like a dead man coming back to life. Opening his eyes, Brahmā saw this universe (*idaṁ*) as the object of his possessiveness along with himself. Or Brahmā saw the object of his false identity as the creator of the universe.

|| 10.13.59 ||

sapady evābhitaḥ paśyan diśo 'paśyat puraḥ-sthitam

vṛndāvanaṁ janājīvya-drumākīrṇaṁ samā-priyam

TRANSLATION

Then, looking in all directions, Lord Brahmā immediately saw Vṛndāvana before him, filled with trees, which were the means of livelihood for the inhabitants and which were equally pleasing in all seasons.

COMMENTARY

Then Kṛṣṇa showed Brahmā the wealth of His sweetness. Brahmā immediately saw Vṛndāvana before him. It was filled with trees, which were nourishing all the living entities, and equally pleasing in all seasons.

|| 10.13.60 ||

yatra naisarga-durvairāḥ sahāsan nṛ-mṛgādayaḥ

mitrāṇīvājitāvāsa-druta-ruṭ-tarṣakādikam

TRANSLATION

Vṛndāvana is the transcendental abode of the Lord, where there is no hunger, anger or thirst. Though naturally inimical, both human beings and fierce animals live there together in transcendental friendship.

COMMENTARY

This verse further describes the sweetness of Vṛndāvana, wherein tigers and men, though naturally inimical (*naisarga durvairāḥ*), live together as friends. Because Vṛndāvana is Kṛṣṇa's residence (*ajita avāsa*) anger, greed and other undesirable things (*anarthas*) have gone from there (*drutaḥ*).

|| 10.13.61 ||

tatrodvahat paśupa-vaṁśa-śiśutva-nāṭyaṁ

brahmādvayaṁ param anantam agādha-bodham

vatsān sakhīn iva purā parito vicinvad

ekaṁ sa-pāṇi-kavalaṁ parameṣṭhy acaṣṭa

TRANSLATION

Then Lord Brahmā saw the Absolute Truth—who is one without a second, who possesses full knowledge and who is unlimited—assuming the role of a child in a family of cowherd men and standing all alone, just as before, with a morsel of food in His hand, searching everywhere for the calves and His cowherd friends.

COMMENTARY

Covering up the four handed *viṣṇu-mūrti* forms generated from His own form by *yogamāyā*, Kṛṣṇa showed Brahmā His original form described in the *Śrutis* as *akhaṇḍa advitīya brahmā*. There (*tatra*) in Vṛndāvana, Brahmā (*parameṣṭhi*) saw (*acaṣṭa*) Kṛṣṇa. What did Kṛṣṇa look like? Concealing His majesty, Kṛṣṇa played as a cowherd boy standing with some food in His hand while loitering with His calves and boyfriends. Brahmā did not see Kṛṣṇa as *catur-bhuja* Nārāyaṇa; he simply saw an innocent boy. Yet he understood that Kṛṣṇa was the master of the whole creation. Brahmā thought, "Here is the Lord of the universe. I am simply His insignificant servant."

Kṛṣṇa is addressed as *advaya* (without a second) because all the forms that Brahmā had seen until he became stunned had now been covered up by *yogamāyā*. Because Kṛṣṇa is the root cause of all the other forms, He is called Supreme (*paraṁ*). Kṛṣṇa is called *ananta*, unlimited, because He possesses powers thousands of times greater than what He showed to Brahmā. Kṛṣṇa is called *agādha bodham*, possessing unlimited knowledge, because not only Brahmā but even Baladeva and other expansions find it difficult to understand Him.

Because Kṛṣṇa was performing like an actor (*nātyam*), He was searching here and there for the calves and boys. One year before, Brahmā, under illusion, took that to be the actual fact. But now after seeing the calves grazing on the grass in the pasture and the boys taking lunch on the river bank, and no longer seeing the illusory boys created by *māyā* that he had stolen, Brahmā became free from his illusion. He understood that Kṛṣṇa's looking for the calves and boys again was some act of Kṛṣṇa for bewildering him.

Thus in the first verse of the next chapter containing Brahmā's prayers, there is no mention of Kṛṣṇa searching for the calves and boys. Because of *yogamāyā's* covering the four handed forms coming from Himself, Kṛṣṇa is described in this verse as (*ekam*) alone, all by Himself. Kṛṣṇa performs unlimited pastimes to please His pure devotees; therefore here He appeared sweetly with a lump of yogurt rice in His hand. For less qualified persons kṛṣṇa shows His formless aspect. Then *yogamāyā* covers the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa's transcendental form, qualities, pastimes, abode and associates, and leaves only the revelation of Kṛṣṇa's formless feature. Though there is an extreme difference in the realization of Brahman and Bhagavān, there is no contradiction in the scriptures describing these features of the one Absolute Truth.

Some will claim that the phrase *śiśutva-nāṭyam*, means “putting on the dress of a cowherd boy,” therefore, the cowherd boy form is not the eternal form (*svarūpa*) of Brahman, but simply a temporary form that illustrates the Lord’s power to bewilder a living entity such as Brahmā. Furthermore, the Lord only accepted the form of a cowherd boy as a convenient object of praise for Brahmā to offer his prayers as described in Chapter Fourteen verse one: *naumīdya te ’bhra-vapuṣe*, “I praise the most worshipable one, who has a body the color of a dark rain cloud.”

But this is not in agreement with Śrīdhara Swāmi’s opinion, because the subject of prayers should never be an unreal thing. Indeed, the transcendental form of Kṛṣṇa holding a lump of yogurt rice in His hand exists eternally.

|| 10.13.62 ||

dṛṣṭvā tvareṇa nija-dhoraṇato ’vatīrya

pṛthvyāṁ vapuḥ kanaka-daṇḍam ivābhipātya

spṛṣṭvā catur-mukuṭa-koṭibhir aṅghri-yugmaṁ

natvā mud-aśru-sujalair akṛtābhiṣekam

TRANSLATION

After seeing this, Lord Brahmā hastily got down from his swan carrier, fell down like a golden rod and touched the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa with the tips of the four crowns on his heads. Offering his obeisances, he bathed the feet of Kṛṣṇa with the water of his tears of joy.

COMMENTARY

When Lord Brahmā understood that the Absolute Truth, Parabrahman, the root cause of everything, was standing before him in His human form as a cowherd boy of Vraja, he quickly jumped off the back of his swan carrier (*nija dhoraṇtah*) and fell to the earth. There is a famous saying that demigods never touch the earth. Brahmā’s breaking this rule indicates that he gave up his prestige as a demigod. Because Brahmā’s four heads were facing in four directions, to touch the Lord’s feet, he had to fall on the ground and raise himself again and again. He bathed Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet (*akrta abhiṣekam*) with a profuse outpouring of tears. The prefix “*su*” in the word *sujalaiḥ*, which means water, indicates that Brahmā’s tears were purified. Therefore, Brahmā’s crying was a form of *bhakty-anubhāva*, a transformation of transcendental ecstatic love.

|| 10.13.63 ||

utthāyotthāya kṛṣṇasya cirasya pādayoḥ patan

āste mahitvaṁ prāg-dṛṣṭaṁ smṛtvā smṛtvā punaḥ punaḥ

TRANSLATION

Rising and falling again and again at the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa for a long time, Lord Brahmā remembered over and over the Lord's greatness he had just seen.

COMMENTARY

After paying obeisances many times, Brahmā remained on the ground at Kṛṣṇa's feet for a long time due to being overwhelmed by intense bliss. This verse is in the present tense because Śukadeva was directly experiencing the pastime.

|| 10.13.64 ||

śanair athotthāya vimṛjya locane mukundam udvīkṣya vinamra-kandharaḥ

kṛtāñjaliḥ praśrayavān samāhitaḥ sa-vepathur gadgadayailatelayā

TRANSLATION

Then, rising very gradually and wiping his two eyes, Lord Brahmā looked up at Mukunda. Lord Brahmā, his head bent low, his mind concentrated and his body trembling, very humbly began, with faltering words, to offer praises to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

This verse mentions that Brahmā saw the Lord with only two eyes, because all eight of his eyes were brimming with tears. The word *locane* indicates that with his two hands Brahmā wiped the two eyes on each of his four faces. Brahmā praised Lord Kṛṣṇa with a choked up voice. The word *ailata* in the phrase *gadgadayailatelaya* comes from *aitta* which means to praise. "*La*" has been added to the word *aitta* to imitate the sound of Brahmā's choked voice. The word *gadgadaya* means faltering voice.

Thus ends the commentary on the Thirteenth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Fourteen

Brahmā’s Prayers to Lord Kṛṣṇa

|| 10.14.1 ||

śrī-brahmovāca

naumīḍya te ’bhra-vapuṣe taḍid-ambarāya

guñjāvataṁsa-paripiccha-lasan-mukhāya

vanya-sraje kavala-vetra-viṣāṇa-veṇu-

lakṣma-śriye mṛdu-pade paśupāṅgajāya

TRANSLATION

Lord Brahmā said: My dear Lord, You are the only worshipable Lord, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and therefore I offer my humble obeisances and prayers just to please You. O son of the king of the cowherds, Your transcendental body is dark blue like a new cloud, Your garment is brilliant like lightning, and the beauty of Your face is enhanced by Your guñjā earrings and the peacock feather on Your head. Wearing garlands of various forest flowers and leaves, and equipped with a herding stick, a buffalo horn and a flute, You stand beautifully with a morsel of food in Your hand.

COMMENTARY

This chapter relates how Brahmā, though maintaining a mood of reverence, immersed himself in the great ocean of Kṛṣṇa's sweetness. After praising Śrī Kṛṣṇa with great devotion mixed with knowledge, Brahmā asks some questions.

I am not afraid if the real devotees, who are relishing great bliss by collecting loads of jewels, mock my stance of selling jewels (offering a few jewels). Meditating with determination solely upon the lotus feet of my *guru*, my heart desires to cross of the ocean of Brahmā's prayers.

Now Brahmā has directly realized that Nandanandana is the source of all forms of eternity, knowledge and bliss. Having attained firm devotion at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, Brahmā profusely praises the Lord. Brahmā said, "My dear Vāsudeva! You are the source of countless forms, and are the only worshipable (*īḍya*) Lord. You are glorified by everyone in the universe from me down to the grass. In order to attain You, I offer these praises unto You."

"Or, simply to please You, I glorify You in verse. Your transcendental body, dark blue like a fresh rain cloud, is wrapped in a garment more brilliant than lightning."

Brahmā's words describing Kṛṣṇa suggest two things: the earth gets relief from the scorching heat of summer through the cloud of Kṛṣṇa's rain. And the *cātaka* bird, like devotees sustain their lives with the mercy pouring from the rain cloud of Kṛṣṇa.

Brahmā continues, "*Guñjā* berry earrings accent the beauty of Your face, flowers adorn Your hair, and a peacock feather rests atop Your head." Brahmā's description reveals the superiority of the lowly *guñjā* berries of Vraja to the precious jewels of Vaikuṇṭha. The forest garland of wild flowers and leaves around Kṛṣṇa's neck is superior to those made of the *pārijāta* flowers from Svargaloka. By mentioning the morsel of yogurt rice in Kṛṣṇa's hand, His stick and horn, Brahmā indicates the superiority of Kṛṣṇa's cowherd boy form over all others. In mentioning Kṛṣṇa's soft feet (*mṛdu pade*), Brahmā indicates that those wandering in the forest of Vṛndāvana become filled with ecstasy upon seeing Kṛṣṇa's foot prints. By stating that Kṛṣṇa is the son of a cow herder (*paśupa aṅga jāya*), Brahmā shows the superior fortune of Nanda over Vasudeva.

|| 10.14.2 ||

asyāpi deva vapuṣo mad-anugrahasya

svecchā-māyāsya na tu bhūta-mayasya ko 'pi

neśe mahi tv avasituṁ manasāntareṇa

sākṣāt tavaiva kim utātma-sukhānubhūteḥ

TRANSLATION

My dear Lord, neither I nor anyone else can estimate the potency of this transcendental body of Yours, which has shown such mercy to me and which appears just to fulfill the desires of Your pure devotees. Although my mind is completely withdrawn from material affairs, I cannot understand Your personal form. How, then, could I possibly understand the happiness You experience within Yourself?

COMMENTARY

Hearing Brahmā's praises, Kṛṣṇa may object: "Listen Lord Brahmā! You are the master of all powers in this universe, while I am but the son of a cowherd man in the forest. You arc an ancient and exalted personality, and I am but a small boy. You are knowledgeable of all the *Vedas*, and endowed with the most exemplary conduct. But I am an ignorant keeper of cows, and so unaware of proper conduct that I run around with some yogurt rice in My hand. You are the supreme lord, full of bliss, and the controller of all illusion. But I am bewildered by your illusion, and wander about the forest grieving over lost calves. Thus I am not qualified for your praise."

Fearing such objections from Kṛṣṇa, Brahmā spoke this verse, repenting for having offended Kṛṣṇa due to His ignorance. "I cannot estimate (*avasituṁ*) the greatness of Your transcendental body, engaging in childish play, what to speak of Your pastimes of youth (*kaiśora*). If I cannot understand the potency of Your transcendental body, then how could I possibly understand the happiness You experience within Yourself by herding the calves. I cannot comprehend the happiness Your cowherd friends feel, what to speak of the happiness You experience by directly playing with them. If a person with a controlled mind cannot understand that happiness, what can be said of those with uncontrolled minds?"

In this way Brahmā expressed five levels of ignorance. Brahmā described Kṛṣṇa's body in this way to prove that the Supreme Lord cannot be understood by *yoga*, austerity or *śāstric* study. Kṛṣṇa is understood only by mercy.

Brahmā continued, "My Lord, although I offended You, due to Your magnanimity You have shown such mercy to me. That mercy consisted of revealing Your sweet human form after showing Your awesome *viṣṇu-mūrtis*. What is the cause of that mercy? Your body is *sva icchā-maya*. It appears in response to the desires of Your pure devotees who

want to see and serve You. You show mercy out of affection for Your devotees. Though I am an offender, because I have a semblance of devotion I have become qualified to receive a drop of Your mercy."

Patiently listening to Brahmā, Kṛṣṇa replied, "But to fulfill desires and show mercy are traits of human beings also."

Brahmā responded, "But my Lord, Your body is not material (*bhūta mayaysya*). Your body is spiritual."

Brahma Saṁhitā (5.32) says: *aṅgāni yasya sakalendriya-vṛttimanti paśyanti pānti kalayanti ciraṁ jaganti*, "Every part of Kṛṣṇa's body has all the potencies of other parts of the body." This verse shows not only that the Lord can perform any bodily function with any of His limbs, but also that He can see through the eyes of His Viṣṇu expansions, and similarly that He can hear through the ears of any Viṣṇu expansion. Although the Lord can perform any function with any one of His senses, in His transcendental pastimes as Govinda He generally sees with His eyes, touches with His hands and hears with His ears. Thus Kṛṣṇa acts like the most beautiful and charming young cowherd boy.

Brahmā continued, "My Lord, You have shown me the form of Vāsudeva (*deva vapu*), who bestowed mercy (*mad anugrahasya*) by teaching me the four verses (*catuḥ-śloki*) of *Bhāgavatam*. To fulfill Your desires (*icchā-maya*), Your transcendental body is the source of these Vāsudeva forms (*sva*). Though Your body fulfills Your desires, it is spiritual and not like our bodies, which are products of matter (*bhūta mayasya*). I cannot estimate the potency of Your spiritual body, even though I have revealed the *Vedas* and studied the fruit of the *Vedas, Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. I cannot even understand the greatness of Your Vāsudeva forms, what to speak of the greatness of the original source of those transcendental forms, the two-armed form of Govinda. In this topmost of transcendental forms as an innocent cowherd boy, You intensely relish the pastimes of stealing butter, drinking the *gopīs*' breast-milk, tending the calves, playing Your flute, and enjoying Your childhood pranks, which are extraordinary even in comparison with the activities of Your Viṣṇu expansions."

|| 10.14.3 ||

jñāne prayāsam udapāsya namanta eva

jīvanti san-mukharitāṁ bhavadīya-vārtām

sthāne sthitāḥ śruti-gatāṁ tanu-vāṅ-manobhir

ye prāyaśo 'jita jito 'py asi tais tri-lokyām

TRANSLATION

Those who, even while remaining situated in their established social positions, throw away the process of speculative knowledge and with their body, words and mind offer all respects to descriptions of Your personality and activities, dedicating their lives to these narrations, which are vibrated by You personally and by Your pure devotees, certainly conquer Your Lordship, although You are otherwise unconquerable by anyone within the three worlds.

COMMENTARY

The *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (3.8) states: *tam eva viditvā*, "Freedom is possible only by understanding Brahman." If that is the case, then how can an ignorant person attain liberation? This verse answers the question.

Brahmā said, "Your devotees give up all endeavors for knowledge (*prayāsam udapāsya*). They simply spend their time hearing Your glories (*bhavadīya vārtām*) spoken by You and Your pure devotees (*sammukharitāṁ*). Staying in their social positions (*sthāne sthitāḥ*). they do not travel around to holy *tirthas*. Without doing anything else, devotees pass their lives hearing topics (*śrutigatāṁ*) about Your name, qualities and pastimes, and they offer all respects to these narrations with their bodies, minds and words. They use their intelligence to grasp the meaning of the subjects heard. In this way, the pure devotees conquer You, although You are otherwise unconquerable by anyone within the three worlds.

"You are not conquered by those who attain liberation through *jñāna*. Indeed, to attain liberation from the cycle of repeated birth and death merely by hearing about You is astonishing. By knowledge of Brahman, which is but one aspect of the Absolute Truth, *jñānīs* cross the ocean of birth and death. That is the meaning of the *Śruti* statement, 'Freedom is possible only by understanding Brahman.'"

|| 10.14.4 ||

śreyaḥ-sṛtiṁ bhaktim udasya te vibho kliśyanti ye kevala-bodha-labdhaye

teṣām asau kleśala eva śiṣyate nānyad yathā sthūla-tuṣāvaghātinām

TRANSLATION

My dear Lord, devotional service unto You is the best path for self-realization. If someone gives up that path and engages in the cultivation of speculative knowledge, he will simply undergo a troublesome process and will not achieve his desired result. As a person who beats an empty husk of wheat cannot get grain, one who simply speculates cannot achieve self-realization. His only gain is trouble.

COMMENTARY

One can achieve success by performing any one of the methods of *bhakti* such as hearing and chanting. The *Nṛsiṁha Purāṇa* confirms this, “Since one can easily attain the original Personality of Godhead by worshiping Him with devotion using leaves, flowers fruits and water, which are freely available, why does one need to endeavor for liberation separately?”

Though this is true, those who reject *bhakti* and pursue the path of speculative knowledge (*jñāna*) only gain trouble and botheration. This is the intention of the verse.

Śrīdhara Swami says that *jñāna* is a dry path, whereas *bhakti* is a cool stream flowing like a river of honey. The word *śreyaḥ* (supreme benefit) also refers to all the fruits of all other processes such as *karma* and *jñāna*. The path of *bhakti* gives all these fruits, and is thus called the *śreyaḥ sṛtiṁ*, the path of supreme benefit. The *jñānīs* who reject (*udasya*) the path of auspiciousness (*śreyaḥ sṛtiṁ*) get only suffering (*kleśala*). It is like beating a huge pile of empty husks of rice. The result of the effort is pain in the hands and no rice.

|| 10.14.5 ||

pureha bhūman bahavo ’pi yoginas tvad-arpitehā nija-karma-labdhayā

vibudhya bhaktyaiva kathopanītayā prapedire ’ñjo ’cyuta te gatiṁ parām

TRANSLATION

O almighty Lord, in the past many yogīs in this world achieved the platform of devotional service by offering all their endeavors unto You and faithfully carrying out their prescribed duties. Through such devotional service, perfected by the processes of hearing and chanting about You, they came to understand You, O infallible one, and could easily surrender to You and achieve Your supreme abode.

COMMENTARY

In the previous two verses, Brahmā used negative and positive statements to establish that devotional service is the means of attaining the Lord. The present verse describes the primary activities of bhakti, namely hearing and chanting about Kṛṣṇa.

Brahmā said, "O almighty Lord (*bhūman*), in this world there are many who practice *bhakti* (*yoginaḥ*) and offer their activities to You, engaging all their senses in works of devotion. Being fully absorbed in *bhakti* with faith, and disregarding *varṇāśrama*, they engage in hearing and chanting only about You. By the *prema-bhakti* which arises from hearing and chanting (*kathopanītayā*), they realize (*vibudhya*) Your form, qualities and pastimes, and thus attain Your eternal association in the spiritual world."

This verse can also be taken as a rejection of the yoga process after having rejected *jñāna* in the previous verses. "After practicing *yoga* for a long time one may come to the platform of devotional service and attain firm devotion at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa."

|| 10.14.6 ||

tathāpi bhūman mahimāguṇasya te viboddhum arhaty amalāntar-ātmabhiḥ

avikriyāt svānubhavād arūpato hy ananya-bodhyātmatayā na cānyathā

TRANSLATION

Nondevotees, however, cannot realize You in Your full personal feature. Nevertheless, it may be possible for them to realize Your expansion as the impersonal Supreme by cultivating direct perception of the Self within the heart. But they can do this only by purifying their mind and senses of all conceptions of material distinctions and all attachment to material sense objects. Only in this way will Your impersonal feature manifest itself to them.

|| 10.14.7 ||

guṇātmanas te 'pi guṇān vimātuṁ hitāvatīrṇasya ka īśire 'sya

kālena yair vā vimitāḥ su-kalpair bhū-pāṁśavaḥ khe mihikā dyu-bhāsaḥ

TRANSLATION

In time, learned philosophers or scientists might be able to count all the atoms of the earth, the particles of snow, or perhaps even the shining molecules

radiating from the sun, the stars and other luminaries. But among these learned men, who could possibly count the unlimited transcendental qualities possessed by You, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who have descended onto the surface of the earth for the benefit of all living entities?

COMMENTARY

"You possess unlimited, eternal qualities (*guṇātmanaḥ*) that arise from Your spiritual form." This is confirmed in the scripture known as *Brahma-tarka*: *gunaih svarupa bhutais tu guny asau harir isvarah*, "The Lord possesses qualities which arise from His svarūpa, personal form."

Brahmā said, "But who can count (*vimātum*) those qualities? No one can." The *avatāras* such as Saṅkarṣaṇa, who descend on earth to extinguish the suffering of the world, actually have counted the number of atoms on the earth, the snowflakes, and even the particles of sunlight. Yet even such a personality as Saṅkarṣaṇa, who has been continuously chanting Kṛṣṇa's glories since time immemorial, cannot come to an end of enumerating those glories.

There is another meaning of the word *guṇātmanaḥ*. The Lord is the protector of the world consisting of the three *gunas*, modes of material nature. "No one can come to an end of counting the qualities of You who engage in pastimes of protecting the universe. What to speak then of being able to describe the most astonishing qualities that You exhibit during Your sweet childhood pastimes in Vṛndāvana, wherein You steal yogurt from the Vraja-gopīs."

|| 10.14.8 ||

tat te 'nukampāṁ su-samīkṣamāṇo bhuñjāna evātma-kṛtaṁ vipākam

hṛd-vāg-vapurbhir vidadhan namas te jīveta yo mukti-pade sa dāya-bhāk

TRANSLATION

My dear Lord, one who earnestly waits for You to bestow Your causeless mercy upon him, all the while patiently suffering the reactions of his past misdeeds and offering You respectful obeisances with his heart, words and body, is surely eligible for liberation, for it has become his rightful claim.

COMMENTARY

Now that Brahmā has rejected other processes and accepted *bhakti* as the means to attain Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the process of *bhakti* is described. A devotee understands that the happiness and distress He undergoes due to performing *bhakti* and committing *aparādhas* are special mercy from the Lord. It is like the father who sometimes makes His child drink milk and sometimes makes him drink bitter *neem* juice. Sometimes the father embraces and kisses His son and other times He beats him. The devotee accepts whatever happens to him as the arrangement of Lord acting for His benefit.

The devotee thinks, "The Lord certainly knows what is best for me, even if I don't know. *Karma* and time have no effect on a devotee, so this is Kṛṣṇa's personal arrangement for me. Out of His mercy, Kṛṣṇa sometimes gives me happiness and sometimes gives me distress, considering how to engage me in His service."

This point is confirmed in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (4.20.31): *yathā cared bāla-hitaṁ pitā svayaṁ, tathā tvam evārhasi naḥ samīhitum*, "As a father, not waiting for the son's demand, does everything for the benefit of the son, please bestow upon me whatever You think best for me." The person who spends His life offering respects with body, mind and words to the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa like Pṛthu Mahārāja while tolerating the suffering of austerities or other hardships becomes the recipient (*dāyabhāk*) of two results: liberation from material bondage and service to the Lord (*mukti-pada*).

As the inheritance from the father maintains the life of the son, so the attainment of liberation and service to the Lord maintains the life of the devotee. Thus while living in this world the devotee remains fixed on the path of devotion. The *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.87.17) says: *dṛtaya iva śvasanty asu-bhṛto yadi te 'nuvidhā*: "Only if they become Your faithful followers are those who breathe actually alive, otherwise their breathing is like that of a bellows." One's life becomes successful by serving Kṛṣṇa with devotion. Otherwise the body is just like a bellows inhaling and exhaling air.

|| 10.14.9 ||

paśyeśa me 'nāryam ananta ādye parātmani tvayy api māyi-māyini

māyāṁ vitatyekṣitum ātma-vaibhavaṁ hy ahaṁ kiyān aiccham ivārcir agnau

TRANSLATION

My Lord, just see my uncivilized impudence! To test Your power I tried to extend my illusory potency to cover You, the unlimited and primeval Supersoul,

who bewilder even the masters of illusion. What am I compared to You? I am just like a small spark in the presence of a great fire.

COMMENTARY

Brahmā expresses His repentance in this verse. Rather than performing devotional activities, Brahmā thinks He has simply committed a great offense to Kṛṣṇa.

The word *arya* means a wise or worthy person. Brahmā said, "Oh Lord, see my *anaryam*, my contemptible behavior and foolishness. You may give suitable punishment or forgiveness; otherwise persons like me will commit further impropriety."

Brahmā continued, "What was my bad conduct? You are my father and the source (*ādya*) of everything. Yet I offended You when You were enjoying lunch with Your friends in the forest. What was my foolishness? You have immeasurable (*ananta*) powers and You are the soul of all souls (*parātmani*). Revealing my foolishness, I misused my position to commit an offense against You. I have shown the ultimate foolishness in attempting to mystify You who bewilder even the masters of illusion. I desired to see Your powers by invoking my powers of illusion. But beside You, I am as insignificant as a spark emanating from a huge fire."

|| 10.14.10 ||

ataḥ kṣamasvācyuta me rajo-bhuvo hy ajānatas tvat-pṛthag-īśa-māninaḥ

ajāvalepāndha-tamo-'ndha-cakṣuṣa eṣo 'nukampyo mayi nāthavān iti

TRANSLATION

Therefore, O infallible Lord, kindly excuse my offenses. I have taken birth in the mode of passion and am therefore simply foolish, presuming myself a controller independent of Your Lordship. My eyes are blinded by the darkness of ignorance, which causes me to think of myself as the unborn creator of the universe. But please consider that I am Your servant and therefore worthy of Your compassion.

COMMENTARY

Brahmā continued, "Though my bad conduct is worthy of punishment, my foolishness is worthy of forgiveness, so please be merciful and pardon me completely. Do not withhold Your mercy from this fallen one. Therefore, I address You as Acyuta, the infallible Lord. You should remember that the most fallen require more mercy, so kindly pardon my offense."

Brahmā then identifies His low qualities. “I haven taken birth in the mode of passion (*rajobhuvaḥ*), and I foolishly think that I am separate from You.”

Brahmā explains His identity as a controller: “With great pride I think I am Your son (arising from Your navel), but I am blind (*andha*) in all eight eyes. But my pride will be destroyed when the moon of Your mercy shines upon me.”

How will forgiveness manifest? Kṛṣṇa considers: “This Brahmā (*eso*) is worthy of My mercy, because though He shows himself as the master elsewhere, towards Me he is a servant (*nāthavān*).” Or the meaning can be: “Out of foolishness, Brahmā made a show of independence in front of Me, but in truth Brahmā is controlled (*nāthavān*) because of dependence on My energy. Therefore I should show him mercy.”

|| 10.14.11 ||

kvāhaṁ tamo-mahad-ahaṁ-kha-carāgni-vār-bhū-

saṁveṣṭitāṇḍa-ghaṭa-sapta-vitasti-kāyaḥ

kvedṛg-vidhāvigaṇitāṇḍa-parāṇu-caryā-

vātādhva-roma-vivarasya ca te mahitvam

TRANSLATION

What am I, a small creature measuring seven spans of my own hand? I am enclosed in a potlike universe composed of material nature, the total material energy, false ego, ether, air, water and earth. And what is Your glory? Unlimited universes pass through the pores of Your body just as particles of dust pass through the openings of a screened window.

COMMENTARY

Brahmā said, “Though You create the universe, You are not proud. In comparison with that, what powers do I have to be proud of? Your universal form is surrounded by *prakṛti* (*tamas*), *mahat tattva, ahaṅkāra* (*aham*), *ether* (*khaṁ*), air, fire, water (*vāḥ*) and earth (*bhūḥ*). All the planets from Pātāla to Satyaloka are situated within that form of Yours. In that expanse, where am I, measuring only seven spans of my own hand? Countless universes pass through the pores of Your skin just as particles of dust pass through the holes of a window screen. Who can possibly measure that greatness?”

Here Brahmā equates Mahāviṣṇu, the creator of *mahat-tattva*, with Kṛṣṇa, and shows that in comparison to Kṛṣṇa, He is like a small bird compared to Garuḍa.

|| 10.14.12 ||

utkṣepaṇaṁ garbha-gatasya pādayoḥ kiṁ kalpate mātur adhokṣajāgase

kim asti-nāsti-vyapadeśa-bhūṣitaṁ tavāsti kukṣeḥ kiyad apy anantaḥ

TRANSLATION

O Lord Adhokṣaja, does a mother take offense when the child within her womb kicks with his legs? And is there anything in existence—whether designated by various philosophers as real or as unreal—that is actually outside Your abdomen?

COMMENTARY

In this verse Brahmā equates Kṛṣṇa with Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, saying, "As You are mother to the universe, You are also mother to me. Therefore You should forgive my offenses. When the child in the womb kicks the mother, the mother does not take offense. Whether philosophers prove that the universe is true or false, the fact is that it exists within Your belly. I am also within You, just like Your son. Therefore You should forgive my offense."

This is similar to the *Bhagavad-gītā* verse (9.17): *pitāham asya jagato mātā dhātā pitāmahaḥ*. I am the father, mother, grandfather and support of this universe."

|| 10.14.13 ||

jagat-trayāntodadhi-samplavode nārāyaṇasyodara-nābhi-nālāt

vinirgato 'jas tv iti vāṅ na vai mṛṣā kintv īśvara tvan na vinirgato 'smi

TRANSLATION

My dear Lord, it is said that when the three planetary systems are merged into the water at the time of dissolution, Your plenary portion, Nārāyaṇa, lies down on the water, gradually a lotus flower grows from His navel, and Brahmā takes

birth upon that lotus flower. Certainly, these words are not false. Thus am I not born from You?

COMMENTARY

The son also comes out of the womb eventually. That is explained in this verse. Brahmā said, “It is stated that at the time of dissolution, the three planetary systems are merged into the water. Gradually a lotus flower grows from the navel of Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, and Brahmā appears upon that lotus flower. Others may or may not come from You, but certainly I am born from You.”

|| 10.14.14 ||

nārāyaṇas tvaṁ na hi sarva-dehinām ātmāsy adhīśākhila-loka-sākṣī

nārāyaṇo ’ṅgaṁ nara-bhū-jalāyanāt tac cāpi satyaṁ na tavaiva māyā

TRANSLATION

Are You not the original Nārāyaṇa, O supreme controller, since You are the Soul of every embodied being and the eternal witness of all created realms? Indeed, Lord Nārāyaṇa is Your expansion, and He is called Nārāyaṇa because He is the generating source of the primeval water of the universe. He is real, not a product of Your illusory Māyā.

COMMENTARY

Anticipating that Kṛṣṇa might say, “It is true that you are the son of Nārāyaṇa. But then who am I, O Brahmā?” Brahmā answers in this verse: “Are You not Nārāyaṇa, the supreme controller (*adhīśa*) of everything?” The *Bhagavad-gītā* states, ‘I pervade everything by one fragment of My energy.’

Brahmā: “As the Supersoul of all living entities You observe all action. Nārāyaṇa is merely a portion of You.”

Kṛṣṇa: “But I am called Kṛṣṇa because I am dark in color and live in Vṛndāvana. Viṣṇu is called Nārāyaṇa because He lies in the water (*nara*). How can I be Nārāyaṇa?”

Brahmā: “The word *nāra* means water but it also means living entity and *ayana* means shelter. The Lord who dwells in the water is one of Your expansions. Therefore I have appeared from Your womb. Just as the Vāsudeva form and Your youthful form as Kṛṣṇa are spiritual not material, so this form of Nārāyaṇa is also spiritual, existing at all times and places in the state of *suddha-sattva* (pure goodness), beyond the touch of matter. Your forms such as Matsya are also of the same category.”

|| 10.14.15 ||

tac cej jala-sthaṁ tava saj jagad-vapuḥ kiṁ me na dṛṣṭaṁ bhagavaṁs tadaiva

kiṁ vā su-dṛṣṭaṁ hṛdi me tadaiva kiṁ no sapady eva punar vyadarśi

TRANSLATION

My dear Lord, if Your transcendental body, which shelters the entire universe, is actually lying upon the water, then why were You not seen by me when I searched for You? And why, though I could not envision You properly within my heart, did You then suddenly reveal Yourself?

COMMENTARY

Brahmā thinks, “Is it possible that this spiritual form arises from material water? It is not possible that the unlimited Lord Nārāyaṇa can exist in the limited waters of Garbhodaka.”

Brahmā said, “If Your transcendental body is actually situated upon the water, then why couldn’t I see You even after searching for a long time in the lotus stem? You may answer that You were there but that I could not see You. But then how could I suddenly see You through meditation, and then lose sight of You again? Though You are lying on the water and seem to be localized and therefore limited, You hold all the universes within You and are therefore unlimited. You exist at all times in all places, but by the covering of Your *yogamāyā* potency You are sometimes visible and sometimes invisible.”

|| 10.14.16 ||

atraiva māyā-dhamanāvatāre hy asya prapañcasya bahiḥ sphuṭasya

kṛtsnasya cāntar jaṭhare jananyā māyātvam eva prakaṭī-kṛtaṁ te

TRANSLATION

My dear Lord, in this incarnation You have proved that You are the supreme controller of Māyā. Although You are now within this universe, the whole

universal creation is within Your transcendental body—a fact You demonstrated by exhibiting the universe within Your abdomen before Your mother, Yaśodā.

COMMENTARY

It seems like a contradiction to say that Nārāyaṇa, who lies on the water of the universe, holds the universe within His abdomen. One may find a pot within a house, but one could hardly expect to find the house within the same pot. One may argue that the spiritual body of Nārāyaṇa holds an illusory universe within it, and is situated within another real universe. But if that is so, then Brahmā himself cannot be really situated in the Lord's abdomen. In order to establish the oneness of the universe within the Lord and that outside the Lord, Brahmā speaks this verse.

"O supreme controller of illusion (*māyā-dhamana*)! In order to show that the external universe also exists within Your abdomen, You produced an illusion for mother Yaśodā. By the influence of Your *yogamāyā* potency You appeared within this universe and simultaneously exhibited all the universes within Your body. Similarly though I am within Your abdomen, I arose from Your abdomen and am situated here. Thus You are still my mother."

|| 10.14.17 ||

yasya kukṣāv idaṁ sarvaṁ sātmaṁ bhāti yathā tathā

tat tvayy apīha tat sarvaṁ kim idaṁ māyayā vinā

TRANSLATION

Just as this entire universe, including You, was exhibited within Your abdomen, so it is now manifested here externally in the same exact form. How could such things happen unless arranged by Your inconceivable energy?

COMMENTARY

Brahmā said, "Since the external universe and that within the Lord's belly are exactly the same, the one within His belly must be one created by the illusion of the Lord. Just as the universe within Your belly became visible, the external universe also remained visible when You showed the universal form to Your mother. Was the universe exhibited within Your belly a reflection of the external universe? How can that be?

"The universe was there along with You. Can a reflection of a mirror be seen in a mirror? As the universe visible within Your belly contained You, so the external universe also contained You. Because there was not even a trace of difference between the two universes, the universe within Your belly could not exist without the work of *māyā*. Taking Your mother's realization and mine as proof, I conclude that I exist within You by

Your *yogamāyā* potency. Therefore, I pray that You will please forgive me for my offense, as a mother forgives Her child who kicks Her while residing in the womb."

|| 10.14.18 ||

adyaiva tvad ṛte 'sya kiṁ mama na te māyātvam ādarśitam

eko 'si prathamaṁ tato vraja-suhṛd-vatsāḥ samastā api

tāvanto 'si catur-bhujās tad akhilaiḥ sākaṁ mayopāsitās

tāvanty eva jaganty abhūs tad amitaṁ brahmādvayaṁ śiṣyate

TRANSLATION

Have You not shown me today that both You Yourself and everything within this creation are manifestations of Your inconceivable potency? First You appeared alone, and then You manifested Yourself as all of Vṛndāvana's calves and cowherd boys, Your friends. Next You appeared as an equal number of four-handed Viṣṇu forms, who were worshiped by all living beings, including me, and after that You appeared as an equal number of complete universes. Finally, You have now returned to Your unlimited form as the Supreme Absolute Truth, one without a second.

COMMENTARY

Brahmā continued, "The universe You displayed within Your belly and the universe displayed outside that You showed to Your mother, and all the unlimited universes passing in and out of the pores of Your Mahā-Viṣṇu form are produced by Your material energy and are therefore designated as *māyikā*. This I have already understood. But today I have realized the existence of thousands upon thousands of spiritual universes formed through Your inconceivably powerful *svarūpa-śakti*. There is not one object that exists independent of You in the thousands of universes that You have shown today? For everything is emanating from You.

"O Kṛṣṇa! Today You have shown me that both You Yourself and everything within this creation are manifestations of Your inconceivable potency. First You appeared alone, and then by Your *svarūpa-śakti* You expanded as all the cowherd boys and calves of Vraja. Next by *yogamāyā* You covered all the cowherd boys and calves and revealed countless four-handed Viṣṇu forms composed of Your *svarūpa-śakti*. All these *viṣṇu-mūrtis* were being worshiped by all conscious entities from the blades of grass to all the Brahmās. After that You appeared as an equal number of complete universes. Then by Your desire *yogamāyā* covered all this and revealed the one form (*advayam*) of the pure

perfect Brahman with immeasurable incomparable beauty. For my benefit You remain uncovered before my eyes through the potency of *yogamāyā*."

|| 10.14.19 ||

ajānatāṁ tvat-padavīm anātmany ātmātmanā bhāsi vitatya māyām

sṛṣṭāv ivāhaṁ jagato vidhāna iva tvam eṣo 'nta iva trinetraḥ

TRANSLATION

To persons ignorant of Your actual transcendental position, You appear as part of the material world, manifesting Yourself by the expansion of Your inconceivable energy. Thus for the creation of the universe You appear as me [Brahmā], for its maintenance You appear as Yourself [Viṣṇu], and for its annihilation You appear as Lord Trinetra [Śiva].

COMMENTARY

Brahmā prayed, "Not understanding anything about Your transcendental position, the impersonalists think You are simply material (*mahāmāyā*). Persons who think themselves learned, but are ignorant of the path of *bhakti* (*tvat padavīm*), say that You (*ātma*) disperse Yourself in the material energy (*anātmani*) by Your own will (*ātmanā*), and though without form, You appear (*bhasi*) with a form in the material world. For creation of the universe You appear as me [Brahmā] (*aham*), for its maintenance (*vidhāne*) You appear as Yourself [Viṣṇu] (*tvam*), and for destruction You appear as Śiva (*tri-netraḥ*).

"Though You are without form, You take a form to appear in the material world as Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Śiva. Thus the form of Nārāyaṇa situated in the Garbhodaka Ocean and all the *avatāra* forms are all composed of *māyā*. Your expansions as the calves, boys and the four handed forms of Viṣṇu are all *māyā*. This is the conception of the ignorant."

|| 10.14.20 ||

sureṣv ṛṣiṣv īśa tathaiva nṛṣv api tiryakṣu yādaḥsv api te 'janasya

janmāsatāṁ durmada-nigrahāya prabho vidhātaḥ sad-anugrahāya ca

TRANSLATION

O Lord, O supreme creator and master, You have no material birth, yet to defeat the false pride of the faithless demons and show mercy to Your saintly devotees, You take birth among the demigods, sages, human beings, animals and even the aquatics.

COMMENTARY

Brahmā continued, "You thus appear in various places in different *avatāra* forms and also show Your original form to prevent Your devotees from being defeated by these mental speculators. You appear in different *avatāra* forms for the purpose of subduing the false pride of the nondevotees (*asatāṁ*), and to show mercy to Your faithful devotees (*satāṁ*), so they can remember Your blissful transcendental forms, qualities and pastimes."

In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.2.35), the demigods prayed to Kṛṣṇa within the womb of Devakī, "O Lord, cause of all causes, if Your transcendental body were not beyond the modes of material nature, one could not understand the difference between matter and transcendence. Only by Your presence can one understand the transcendental nature of Your Lordship, who are the controller of material nature. Your transcendental nature is very difficult to understand unless one is influenced by the presence of Your transcendental form."

|| 10.14.21 ||

ko vetti bhūman bhagavān parātman yogeśvarotīr bhavatas tri-lokyām

kva vā kathaṁ vā kati vā kadeti vistārayan krīḍasi yoga-māyām

TRANSLATION

O supreme great one! O Supreme Personality of Godhead! O Supersoul, master of all mystic power! Your pastimes are taking place continuously in these three worlds, but who can estimate where, how and when You are employing Your spiritual energy and performing these innumerable pastimes? No one can understand the mystery of how Your spiritual energy acts.

COMMENTARY

Brahmā prayed, "You come as Rāma to kill Rāvaṇa, and as Kṛṣṇa to relieve the burden of the universe. Your white, red, black and *śyāma avatāras* appear to institute religion, not to defeat the philosophical wranglers. Actually no one can fully understand where, when, why and how You will appear.

“O Unlimited Lord, cause of all causes! If Your transcendental body were not beyond the modes of material nature, no one could understand the difference between matter and transcendence. Only by Your presence can one understand the transcendental qualities of Your Lordship, the controller of material nature. O supreme great one! O Personality of Godhead! Although You expand throughout the material universe, You are still full with six opulences. Although You enjoy all opulence, You witness everything in Your expansion as Paramātmā.

“O master of all mystic power! You display inconceivable powers by the agency of *yogamāyā*. Who can understand when, where, why and how Your spiritual energy acts to display Your transcendental pastimes (*uti*) within the three worlds (*trailokyām*)? Your unlimited spiritual form is full of all opulences, and though it is not material it exists everywhere in the material universe.

“But how is it possible to satisfy simultaneously all Your devotees at all times with Your transcendental pastimes? By Your inconcei-vable energy, *yogamāyā* perfectly carries out the work of presenting different pastimes to Your various devotees at the suitable time.”

|| 10.14.22 ||

tasmād idaṁ jagad aśeṣam asat-svarūpaṁ

svapnābham asta-dhiṣaṇaṁ puru-duḥkha-duḥkham

tvayy eva nitya-sukha-bodha-tanāv anante

māyāta udyad api yat sad ivāvabhāti

TRANSLATION

Therefore this entire universe, which like a dream is by nature unreal, nevertheless appears real, and thus it covers one’s consciousness and assails one with repeated miseries. This universe appears real because it is manifested by the potency of illusion emanating from You, whose unlimited transcendental forms are full of eternal happiness and knowledge.

COMMENTARY

Brahmā prayed, “In summary, the universe is material and the medium-sized form of Kṛṣṇa is *suddha-sattva*, completely spiritual. The very essence of the material world is that its existence is temporary (*asat*). It is unreal like a dream, but nevertheless it appears real and covers one’s consciousness (*asta dhiṣaṇam*). The universe appears real because it is manifested by the illusory energy (*māyāta*) of You, whose unlimited

transcendental forms are full of *sandhinī-śakti* (*nitya*), *hlādinī-śakti* (*sukha*) and *saṁvit-śakti* (*bodha*)."

Another meaning: "O Lord, Your form is full of mercy, whereas this universe is full of inauspiciousness. What is the necessity of considering this universe at all if it is false? But the world is not false (*svapna a bham*). From the point of view of material pleasure the ignorant think it is wonderful (*sad iva*), but in reality it is full of misery."

|| 10.14.23 ||

ekas tvam ātmā puruṣaḥ purāṇaḥ satyaḥ svayaṁ-jyotir ananta ādyaḥ

nityo 'kṣaro 'jasra-sukho nirañjanaḥ pūrṇādvayo mukta upādhito 'mṛtaḥ

TRANSLATION

You are the one Supreme Soul, the primeval Supreme Personality, the Absolute Truth—self-manifested, endless and beginningless. You are eternal and infallible, perfect and complete, without any rival and free from all material designations. Your happiness can never be obstructed, nor have You any connection with material contamination. Indeed, You are the indestructible nectar of immortality.

COMMENTARY

Brahmā prayed, "Although You do have infinite forms, You are also present in one transcendental form by Your inconceivable energy. You are the one Supreme Soul (*eka ātmā*), and at the same You expand Yourself as the Supersoul to enter every living being."

Here Kṛṣṇa may protest: "But the Supersoul has no form. He is not a person. After all, the word 'person' generally refers to a being that has a form. You say I am a person. Am I a young person?"

Brahmā replies: "No, You are the oldest."

Again Kṛṣṇa protests: "I am the son of Nanda Baba and I am a young boy of Vraja. It is not right to say that I am the oldest."

Brahmā: “It is true that You are the son of Nanda, but it is also true that You exist eternally (*satyaḥ*) in all three phases of time. Therefore You are the oldest person (*puruṣa*).”

Kṛṣṇa: The supreme person (*puruṣa*) you describe is the creator of time, karma and everything else. How is it possible that I am He?”

Brahmā: “Please do not argue. You are self-effulgent (*svayaṁ-jyotiḥ*).

Kṛṣṇa: “Am I like the sun, limited within a certain area of space?”

Brahmā: “No, You are limitless (*ananta*), not restricted by time and space. Your other avatāras are also the same.”

Kṛṣṇa: “The Supreme has many incarnations, so am I just one of them?”

Brahmā: “You are the source (*ādyaḥ*) of all avatāras; the root of all incarnations.”

Kṛṣṇa: “In the next lifetime of Brahmā will I again incarnate in this form?”

Brahmā: ‘’No, You are *nitya*, eternal. Although the universe is ancient, real and eternal, at the end of my lifetime it is no longer manifested in the same form. Because it will disappear, therefore it is *anitya*, temporary. On the other hand, You will remain eternally in this form as the son of Nanda. Therefore Your form is eternal and unchanging because You are the original Supreme Personality of Godhead.

“The Vedic literatures confirm this by saying: *yo ’sau saurye tiṣṭhati*, “Lord Kṛṣṇa is the same Supreme Personality of Godhead who formerly appeared in the Sūrya-vaṁśa [as Lord Rāma].” The *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* states:

yaḥ sākṣāt para-brahmeti govindaṁ sac-cid-ānanda-

vigrahaṁ vṛndāvana-sura-bhūruha-talāsīnam

> "Lord Kṛṣṇa, whose form is eternal and full of knowledge and bliss, and who sits under a *kalpa-vṛkṣa* tree in Vṛndāvana forest, is the original Supreme Personality of Godhead." You Yourself affirm in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (14.27): *brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham*, 'I am the basis of the impersonal Brahman.'"

Kṛṣṇa: "But those who have bodies are subject to the six transformations, and are therefore disintegrating at every moment. How is it possible that I am like that?"

Brahmā: "No, You are not like that. You are unchanging and indestructible (*akṣaraḥ*)."

Kṛṣṇa: "Those who have bodies also are subject to happiness and distress."

Brahmā: "You are always full of bliss (*ajasra-sukhaḥ*)."

Kṛṣṇa: "But as a child I was greedy to drink My mother's breast milk and steal the *gopīs*' butter and yogurt. As a boy I showed anger toward Kāliya and a host of others. In My teenage years I was lusty to enjoy with the gopīs. Therefore I am impure, and contaminated by lust and a host of other vices."

Brahmā: "That is not true. You are spotless (*nirañjanaḥ*). Your so-called lust and other qualities are all pure and spiritual."

Kṛṣṇa: "Still, I am dependent on the *gopīs* and many others. Because I need them, therefore I am not perfect and complete."

Brahmā: "You are perfect and complete (*pūrṇa*). Your being controlled by the *prema* of Your devotees does not negate Your perfection and completeness."

Kṛṣṇa: "Is there someone else like Me?"

Brahmā: No one else is like You; You are beyond compare (*advayaḥ*)."

Kṛṣṇa: “Very well then, because there is no one else like Me, I am therefore the original Supreme Personality of Godhead. Still, many people think I am simply a transformation of transcendental knowledge.”

Brahmā: “You are not a transformation of transcendental knowledge (*mukta upādhitaḥ*). The *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* (2.24) states: *vidyāvidyābhyāṁ bhinnaḥ*, ‘The Supreme Personality of Godhead is beyond both knowledge and ignorance.’ This is so because You are beyond all limiting designations. In the *Śruti-sāstra* it is said: *amṛtaṁ śāsvatam brahma*, ‘The Supreme Personality of Godhead is eternal. He is far beyond any limiting designation.’” In this passage the word *amṛta* may also be interpreted to mean “He who never dies.”

|| 10.14.24 ||

evaṁ-vidhaṁ tvāṁ sakalātmanām api svātmānam ātmātmatayā vicakṣate

gurv-arka-labdhopaniṣat-sucakṣuṣā ye te tarantīva bhavānṛtāmbudhim

TRANSLATION

Those who have received the clear vision of knowledge from the sunlike spiritual master can see You in this way, as the very Soul of all souls, the Supersoul of everyone’s own self. Thus understanding Your original personality, they are able to cross over the ocean of illusory material existence.

COMMENTARY

The gist of this verse is: “Even the worshipers of Your feature as the impersonal Brahman can, if they get the good fortune of devotion to Your personal form as Paramātmā (*ātmātmatayā*), develop faith in You and attain the status of *śānta-bhaktas*, devotees in the *rasa* of neutrality or passive adoration.”

Brahmā prayed, “With devotion they see Kṛṣṇa as the Supersoul, who has a charming handsome personal form that delights the eyes, mind and heart. They realize that Kṛṣṇa has all the qualities (*evaṁ-vidhaṁ*) described in the previous verses, and that He is the Supersoul present in all living entities (*sakalātmānam*).” This is also described in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*: *paramātmatayā kṛṣṇe, jātā śāntī ratir matā*, “By understanding that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Supersoul, one attains the neutral stage of devotional service (*śānta-rati*).”

The question may be asked: “How does this take place?”

Brahmā answers, “The spiritual master is like the sun. By studying the *Upaniṣads* under him and obtaining his mercy, one attains the proper vision to see Kṛṣṇa as Paramātmā, and the knowledge to cross over the ocean of illusions known as material existence.”

|| 10.14.25 ||

ātmānam evātmatayāvijānatāṁ tenaiva jātaṁ nikhilaṁ prapañcitam

jñānena bhūyo ’pi ca tat pralīyate rajjvām aher bhoga-bhavābhavau yathā

TRANSLATION

A person who mistakes a rope for a snake becomes fearful, but he then gives up his fear upon realizing that the so-called snake does not exist. Similarly, for those who fail to recognize You as the Supreme Soul of all souls, the expansive illusory material existence arises, but knowledge of You at once causes it to subside.

COMMENTARY

“Do they cross the ocean of māyā or not? Why do you say “as if” (*iva*) they transcend it? Why did the previous verse say that the material world is false or unreal (*anṛta*)?”

Verses 24-25 describe the *vivarta-vāda* theory of the impersonalists, who claim that the material world is unreal and the act of transcending the material world is also unreal or false. That is why the word “as if” is sarcastically used here in describing the act of transcending the material world. Those who are unaware (*ātmatayā avijānatām*) that the individual spirit soul (*ātmānam*) is full of knowledge and bliss must enter the material realm. It is because of ignorance that no one can understand the true nature of the soul, and because of ignorance the material world of five elements was created. The word *pralīyate* (disappears) implies that by Sāṅkhya, *yoga,* renunciation, austerity, and devotion (*bhakti*) one attains transcendental wisdom, realizes that the body is different from the soul, and destroys the ocean of material existence. Such a person no longer mistakes a rope for a snake, and with this understanding he is liberated from fear. By ignorance the material world continues, and by knowing Kṛṣṇa the material world ceases.

|| 10.14.26 ||

ajñāna-saṁjñau bhava-bandha-mokṣau dvau nāma nānyau sta ṛta-jña-bhāvāt

ajasra-city ātmani kevale pare vicāryamāṇe taraṇāv ivāhanī

TRANSLATION

The conception of material bondage and the conception of liberation are both manifestations of ignorance. Being outside the scope of true knowledge, they cease to exist when one correctly understands that the pure spirit soul is distinct from matter and always fully conscious. At that time bondage and liberation no longer have any significance, just as day and night have no significance from the perspective of the sun.

COMMENTARY

This verse states that the ideas of material bondage and liberation are both illusions. When one is situated in transcendental knowledge one knows that they are not different from each other. When one understands that he is a pure spirit soul, different from the external material body, then he is no longer bewildered by the illusion of material bondage and liberation. As day and night do not exist on the sun, material bondage and liberation do not exist when one understands the spiritual truth.

|| 10.14.27 ||

tvām ātmānaṁ paraṁ matvā param ātmānam eva ca

ātmā punar bahir mṛgya aho ‘jña-janatājñatā

TRANSLATION

Just see the foolishness of those ignorant persons who consider You to be some separated manifestation of illusion and who consider the self, which is actually You, to be something else, the material body. Such fools conclude that the supreme soul is to be searched for somewhere outside Your supreme personality.

COMMENTARY

Brahmā prayed, “Those who think they are knowledgeable of spiritual things (but are actually not), do not respect Your transcendental form in Vraja. As previously mentioned, such persons are simply beating empty husks. They think Your supreme spiritual body is material, another manifestation of illusion. They consider the self,

which is actually You, to be something material. Thus they search for that supreme soul elsewhere. Just see the ignorance of these foolish people!”

The *Vivarta-vādīs* (evolutionists) and *Pariṇāma-vādīs* (transfor-mationists) debate about the material world instead of the Perfect Lord. The form of this cit Brahman is described in several verses of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*:

śabda-brahmātmanas tasya

“Brahmā is the personal representation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead as the source of transcendental sound and is therefore above the conception of manifested and unmanifested.” (SB 3.12.48)

yat tad vapur bhāti vibhūṣaṇāyudhair

avyakta-cid-vyaktam adhārayad dhariḥ

babhūva tenaiva sa vāmano vaṭuḥ

sampaśyator divya-gatir yathā naṭaḥ

“The Lord appeared in His original form, with ornaments and weapons in His hands. Although this ever-existing form is not visible in the material world, He nonetheless appeared in this form. Then, in the presence of His father and mother, He assumed the form of Vāmana, just like a theatrical actor.” (SB 8.18.12)

satya-jñānānantānanda-mātraika-rasa-mūrtayaḥ

“The viṣṇu-mūrtis [manifested by the gopa named Kṛṣṇa] all had eternal, unlimited forms, full of knowledge and bliss and existing beyond the influence of time.” (SB 10.13.54)

Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad says:

yaḥ sākṣāt para-brahmeti govindaṁ sac-cid- ānanda-

vigraham vṛndāvana-sura-bhūruha-talāsīnam

> “The Absolute Truth Himself is Govinda, who has an eternal form of bliss and knowledge and who is sitting beneath the shady desire trees of Vṛndāvana.”

The *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* (2.36) states:

> *tāsāṁ madhye sākṣād brahma gopāla-purī*

> “Among all these [abodes], the residence of Lord Gopāla is directly the Absolute Truth.”

Brahmā prayed, “Ignoring these scriptural statements that show Brahman has a body and exists in a spiritual abode [*dhāma*], people remain in darkness. They are so fallen that they accept a blind guru *parampara* and discuss *vivartavāda*. They are in the most lamentable of all lamentable conditions in my creation.”

Another reading of *ajña janata* (ignorant people) is *jña janata*. In this case it could be translated “what foolishness of so called learned men.”

|| 10.14.28 ||

antar-bhave ’nanta bhavantam eva hy atat tyajanto mṛgayanti santaḥ

asantam apy anty ahim antareṇa santaṁ guṇaṁ taṁ kim u yanti santaḥ

TRANSLATION

O unlimited Lord, the saintly devotees seek You out within their own bodies by rejecting everything separate from You. Indeed, how can discriminating persons appreciate the real nature of a rope lying before them until they refute the illusion that it is a snake.

COMMENTARY

Brahmā prayed, “The *jñānīs* think that Your form is an attribute of *māyā*. Your saintly devotees (*santaḥ*), however, seek out the pure form of the living entity (*jīva*) free from the covering of *māyā*. By rejecting that which is material, not spiritual (*atat*), they seek out the *jīva* which takes birth among countless species (*ananta bhavam*) in various

bodies (*antarbhave*). To reject everything material, one must first reject the false conception that 'I am the material body.'"

Next, the procedure is mentioned. Brahmā continued, "How can one appreciate the real nature of a rope lying before him until He refutes the illusion that it is a snake? In the *Vedas* it is said *asaṅgo 'yaṁ puruṣaḥ*, "The soul has nothing to do with this body." Thus the *jīva* has no bodily suffering. But due to ignorance the *jīva* identifies with its body and thus experiences various miseries. Without rejecting everything related to the body, can one realize His spiritual identity just by cultivating transcendental knowledge? No, one cannot know the soul without rejecting all attachments to the material body."

|| 10.14.29 ||

athāpi te deva padāmbuja-dvaya- prasāda-leśānugṛhīta eva hi

jānāti tattvaṁ bhagavān-mahimno na cānya eko 'pi ciraṁ vicinvan

TRANSLATION

My Lord, if one is favored by even a slight trace of the mercy of Your lotus feet, he can understand the greatness of Your personality. But those who speculate to understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead are unable to know You, even though they continue to study the Vedas for many years.

COMMENTARY

Brahmā prayed, "Only by Kṛṣṇa *bhakti* is it possible for the living entity, who has discarded His material coverings, to realize the bliss of Brahman. Being blessed with a particle of mercy from Your lotus feet, He can understand the greatness (*mahimno*) of Your personality. Matsya *avatāra* says:

> *madīyam mahimānam ca, paraṁ brahmeti sabditam,*
>
> 'Advised and favored by Me, you will know everything about My glories (*mahimān*), which are known as ParaBrahmā, because they will manifest within your heart.'" (SB 8.24.38)

Śrīdhara Swami explains this verse as follows: "By Kṛṣṇa's mercy one can know the Supreme Brahman. To obtain a particle of the Lord's mercy means that the *jñāni*

performed mixed devotional service previously. The Lord bestows the mercy of *bhakti-yoga* to that *jñāni* who, giving up *avidyā* and *vidyā*, accepts pure *bhakti*. However, one who gives up *bhakti* in preference to *jñāna* and enthusiastically pursues Brahman, though He is a *guru* for thousands of *jñānīs*, studies scripture and practices *yoga* for a long time, will never know the true nature of the Lord."

|| 10.14.30 ||

tad astu me nātha sa bhūri-bhāgo bhave 'tra vānyatra tu vā tiraścām

yenāham eko 'pi bhavaj-janānāṁ bhūtvā niṣeve tava pāda-pallavam

TRANSLATION

My dear Lord, I therefore pray to be so fortunate that in this life as Lord Brahmā or in another life, wherever I take my birth, I may be counted as one of Your devotees. I pray that wherever I may be, even among the animal species, I can engage in devotional service to Your lotus feet.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, "O Brahmā, crest jewel of all knowers of *sādhana* and *sādhya* (practice and goal)! What is your desire after describing *jñāna* and *bhakti* in your prayers? Consider carefully Brahmā and pray for the most valuable thing!"

Indicating himself as a servant, Brahmā replies to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, "Oh master (*nātha*)! Yes, I have discerned the most auspicious thing of all (*bhūri bhāga*). Whether I get a high birth as Lord Brahmā (*bhava atra*), or a low birth as a deer (*tiraścām*) for many births with no chance for liberation since I will lose the opportunity to attain *bhakti*, I pray to take birth as one of Your devotees, either advanced or neophyte."

The following is an outline of Brahmā's prayers: In the first verse of this chapter Brahmā expressed the excellence of the Lord's sweetness. In the second and thirtieth verses praising the Lord's power, Brahmā exhibited a mixture of *bhakti* and *jñāna*. In the third verse (*jñāne prayasam*) he concludes that *bhakti* is superior. In the eighth verse he shows the supremacy of pure (*kevala*) *bhakti* to Kṛṣṇa. In the nineteenth and twenty-seventh verses he derides *kevala-jñāna*. In the fourth and fifth verses Brahmā shows the uselessness of *kevala-jñāna* and the success of *kevala-bhakti*. In the twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth verses he discusses *jñāna* mixed with *bhakti*. In the twenty-fourth verse he discusses *śānta-bhakti* and in the thirtieth verse he discusses *dāsya-bhakti*.

From the thirty-first verse, Brahmā, having submerged in the ocean of Kṛṣṇa's sweetness, praises the devotees immersed in *vātsalya-rāga*, parental love, and other intimate relationships with the Lord.

|| 10.14.31 ||

aho 'ti-dhanyā vraja-go-ramaṇyaḥ stanyāmṛtaṁ pītam atīva te mudā

yāsāṁ vibho vatsatarātmajātmanā yat-tṛptaye 'dyāpi na cālam adhvarāḥ

TRANSLATION

O almighty Lord, how greatly fortunate are the cows and ladies of Vṛndāvana, the nectar of whose breast-milk You have happily drunk to Your full satisfaction, taking the form of their calves and children! All the Vedic sacrifices performed from time immemorial up to the present day have not given You as much satisfaction.

COMMENTARY

Brahmā prayed, "Though totally unqualified, I have prayed to become Your devotee. If You wish, You may fulfill it. Certainly it is not proper for me to pray to attain the elevated stage of Your devotees engaged in the spontaneous attraction of *vātsalya-bhāva* and other moods. I can only praise them." This is expressed in two verses.

Brahmā prayed, "The cows and *gopīs* of Vraja are supremely fortunate." The word *aho* expresses extreme surprise.

"You, with Your transcendental body full of eternal bliss and knowledge, have taken the form of the cowherd boys and the calves to drink the nectarean milk from their mothers' breasts with extreme bliss. With each mouthful You experienced ever-increasing bliss (*atīva mūda*). In Your form as calves You could not even tolerate the time it took to milk the cows. Without taking the form of the cowherd boys it would not have been possible to drink the milk of so many different mothers. O powerful one (*vibho*)! You took many forms out of extreme greed to drink. You could not even miss the nectar from one breast. Since they gave You such bliss, there is no doubt that the bodies of the cows and mothers were transcendental, full of eternal knowledge and bliss. All the Vedic sacrifices performed by myself, Śiva and others from time immemorial up to the present day with perfect actions and mantra chanting have not given You as much satisfaction."

|| 10.14.32 ||

aho bhāgyam aho bhāgyaṁ nanda-gopa-vrajaukasām

yan-mitraṁ paramānandaṁ pūrṇaṁ brahma sanātanam

TRANSLATION

How greatly fortunate are Nanda Mahārāja, the cowherd men and all the other inhabitants of Vrajabhūmi! There is no limit to their good fortune, because the Absolute Truth, the source of transcen-dental bliss, the eternal Supreme Brahman, has become their friend.

COMMENTARY

After praising the *rāgātmikā vātsalya-prema* (deep spontaneous parental affection) of the Vrajavāsīs, Brahmā glorified those with *rāgātmikā sakhya-prema* (*mitraṁ*), and all those relishing intimate relationships with the Lord. The neuter case is used instead of the masculine case as a matter of traditional usage.

The word *anandaṁ* indicates Brahman as described in the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (3.9.34): *satyam vijñānam ānandaṁ brahma*: "The supreme reality is divine knowledge and bliss." The word *parama* is used with it to indicate that Kṛṣṇa is the basis of Brahman. The word *pūrṇam* indicates that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is distinct from the *avatāra* forms who are also brahma *svarūpa*.

Kṛṣṇa is the friend (*mitra*), but not a temporary friend. Kṛṣṇa is the eternal friend (*sanātana*) of Śrīdāmā and others (*yat*). From this eternal friendship it is also understood that Śrīdāmā and others are also eternal. If I make a statement "He is an excellent *brāhmaṇa* because His *brahminical* qualities are excellent," then the person's excellence is also understood. Similarly in speaking of the eternality of Kṛṣṇa's friendship, the friends are also understood to be eternal. This must be explained since the word *mitra* connotes simply an ordinary friend.

All the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana ruled by Nanda Mahārāja (*nanda gopa vrajaukasām*) down to the birds and beasts were fortunate. What then to speak of Nanda himself and His cowherd men? Who can describe the fortune of those who became the friend of *paramānandaṁ brahma sanātanam*? It is indescribable.

The *gopas* themselves say, "O Nanda! Everyone in Vraja has uncontrollable attraction to your son, and He has natural affection for us. What is the cause?" (SB 10.26.13) The cause is that Kṛṣṇa is *pūrṇaṁ brahma*, the complete Absolute Truth. Therefore, the inhabitants of Vraja give the topmost bliss to Kṛṣṇa, and receive the topmost bliss in return. Witnessing this exchange of love, Lord Brahmā repeats the phrase *aho bhāgyaṁ* twice to indicate His extreme bliss and astonishment.

|| 10.14.33 ||

eṣāṁ tu bhāgya-mahimācyuta tāvad āstām

ekādaśaiva hi vayaṁ bata bhūri-bhāgāḥ

etad-dhṛṣīka-caṣakair asakṛt pibāmaḥ

śarvādayo 'ṅghry-udaja-madhv-amṛtāsavaṁ te

TRANSLATION

Yet even though the extent of the good fortune of these residents of Vṛndāvana is inconceivable, we eleven presiding deities of the various senses, headed by Lord Śiva, are also most fortunate, because the senses of these devotees of Vṛndāvana are the cups through which we repeatedly drink the nectarean, intoxicating beverage of the honey of Your lotus feet.

COMMENTARY

"The inhabitants of Vraja have also made us [the demigods] most fortunate." That is the intention of this verse.

Brahmā prayed, "What to speak of the fortune of the Vrajavāsīs, we have also become fortunate. Who can describe it? The demigods like Śiva and I (*śarvādayo*), who are the eleven deities in charge of the senses, have become most fortunate. Through the senses of the Vrajavāsīs we have tasted the extremely intoxicating nectar (*madhv-amṛtāsavaṁ*) of the sweet sound of Kṛṣṇa's ankle bells."

In this way Brahmā expresses His determination to see, hear, touch, taste, smell, sing about and massage the Lord. Besides the ten senses, there is mind, intelligence, false ego, consciousness and their presiding deities. Of these fourteen, the genital and anus are rejected as lowly. Vāsudeva (Kṛṣṇa) is the presiding Lord of consciousness. Excluding these three, leaves the eleven senses and their presiding deities. Therefore, Brahmā prays, "We, the eleven presiding deities of the senses are experiencing Kṛṣṇa's sweetness through the eleven senses of the inhabitants of Vraja."

Something else should be considered here. The sun, moon, demigods, men, animals and all the other entities of the spiritual world are *sac-cid-ānanda*, eternal, full of bliss and knowledge. The material sun, moon and demigods are all expansions of the spiritual prototypes. The demigods of the material realm are specifically empowered agents of the demigods of the spiritual world. The material senses cannot act independently. Only by the sanction and power of the demigods can the material senses experience material objects. But Śrī Kṛṣṇa's eternal associates independently experience the Lord's form and

sound by their own spiritual senses, without any influence of the mundane demigods. In his enthusiasm, however, Brahmā identified his power to control material intelligence with the senses of the inhabitants of Vraja.

Furthermore, the material senses enjoy the objects of the mundane world, but the presiding deities, who facilitate this pleasure, do not enjoy. However, without the presence of Brahmā and the other presiding deities in the intelligence, mind, eyes and nose, the senses of even those fixed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness could not experience the sense objects of form or smell. This is the opinion of those who know the soul.

Because of their eagerness to taste the sweetness Kṛṣṇa, Brahmā and others were able to experience bliss despite two faults: Though Brahmā and the other presiding deities of the senses are mere instigators (*karta*) of the action of the senses, they took on the role of being enjoyers (*bhokta*). Although they are the demigods of the material senses, they took on the role of being demigods of the spiritual senses. These are the contrary actions seen in *Kṛṣṇa-prema*. In *Padyāvalī* it says that one reaches perfection by lying and criticizing. Factually, the senses of the Kṛṣṇa's eternal associates are spiritual like the Lord, so how could material demigods enter their spiritual senses?

There is another meaning of the verse. Sometimes a devotee will praise His own fortune out of greediness to taste Kṛṣṇa's sweetness. "The good fortune of the inhabitants of Vraja is incomparable. But we ten demigods (*dikpalas*) are very fortunate. Why?" Then touching his finger to his senses, Brahmā continued, "Hey Kṛṣṇa! With our senses we also experience Your beauty and sweetness as You leave Vraja to herd the calves."

|| 10.14.34 ||

tad bhūri-bhāgyam iha janma kim apy aṭavyāṁ

yad gokule 'pi katamāṅghri-rajo-'bhiṣekam

yaj-jīvitaṁ tu nikhilaṁ bhagavān mukundas

tv adyāpi yat-pada-rajaḥ śruti-mṛgyam eva

TRANSLATION

My greatest possible good fortune would be to take any birth whatever in this forest of Gokula and have my head bathed by the dust falling from the lotus feet of any of its residents. Their entire life and soul is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Mukunda, the dust of whose lotus feet is still being searched for in the Vedic mantras.

COMMENTARY

“I have given up my control of the universe and the quest for future liberation. But now, how can I get the dust of the feet of the inhabitants of Vraja?” Thinking thus, Brahmā speaks with certainty.

|| 10.14.35 ||

eṣāṁ ghoṣa-nivāsināṁ uta bhavān kiṁ deva rāteti naś

ceto viśva-phalāt phalaṁ tvad-aparaṁ kutrāpy ayan muhyati

sad-veṣād iva pūtanāpi sa-kulā tvām eva devāpitā

yad-dhāmārtha-suhṛt-priyātma-tanaya-prāṇāśayās tvat-kṛte

TRANSLATION

My mind becomes bewildered just trying to think of what reward other than You could be found anywhere. You are the embodiment of all benedictions, which You bestow upon these residents of the cowherd community of Vṛndāvana. You have already arranged to give Yourself to Pūtanā and her family members in exchange for her disguising herself as a devotee. So what is left for You to give these devotees of Vṛndāvana, whose homes, wealth, friends, dear relations, bodies, children and very lives and hearts are all dedicated only to You?

COMMENTARY

Here Brahmā may ask: “O Lord, perhaps You do not want to clearly say if I may attain the dust of the feet of inhabitants of Vraja or not. Well then, please answer one other question (*uta*) that is on my mind? What reward will You give the residents of Vraja?”

Kṛṣṇa replied, “Brahmā, though you know all the truths of the Vedas, can’t you understand the answer?”

Brahmā said, “Our minds (*nas cetah*) are bewildered about this.” By using the plural form of *nas* (our) Brahmā means “Not only my heart, but also the hearts of Śiva, the four Kumāras, Nārada, and all the wise philosophers are bewildered.”

Kṛṣṇa: “Exactly what is the state of your minds?”

Brahmā: “Although with great intelligence we searched in all times and places, our minds have become bewildered trying to think (*ayat*) of what type of reward You could give them. There is no reward (*viśvaphala*) superior to You, and You have already given Yourself eternally to the Vrajavāsīs as their son and other intimate loving relationships. If something better than You existed, then You would have given it to the people of Vraja. However, no such thing exists. That is why our minds are now bewildered.”

Kṛṣṇa: “O Brahmā, you are really ignorant of the truth. Knowing that the Vrajavāsīs would manifest such astonishing spontaneous love for Me, I have in advance given Myself to them as their son, friend or lover, and they are satisfied with this. Others may be grateful for gifts that have already been given, but I am grateful for gifts that will be given in the future, and I reciprocate with these gifts even before they are given.”

Brahmā: “That is true, my Lord, You are certainly doing what is proper. But though Pūtanā was sinful, just by imitating a devotee she and all her family attained You personally. But the inhabitants of Vraja, who, out of great affection, gave up all attachments such as house, wealth, friends, pleasurable objects, body and mind for You, also attained You. First You gave Yourself to the degraded sinner Pūtanā, and then You gave Yourself to the Vrajavāsīs, who are the exalted crest-jewels of all saintly persons. Since You have already given Yourself to Pūtanā, You cannot rightly give Yourself again as a gift to someone else. In essence this is highly improper. Therefore You are now in debt to the residents of Vraja.” Brahmā communicated this message by the movements of his nose, eyes, eyebrows and neck.

|| 10.14.36 ||

tāvad rāgādayaḥ stenās tāvat kārā-gṛhaṁ gṛham

tāvan moho ’ṅghri-nigaḍo yāvat kṛṣṇa na te janāḥ

TRANSLATION

My dear Lord Kṛṣṇa, until people become Your devotees, their material attachments and desires remain thieves, their homes remain prisons, and their affectionate feelings for their family members remain foot-shackles.

COMMENTARY

Here Lord Kṛṣṇa may protest: “The *sannyāsīs* will object that the inhabitants of Vraja, who are all householders, have fallen into a network of material life, bound by attachment to wife, children, and a host of other persons and things.”

Brahmā replies, “Yes. That is true for most materialistic *gṛhastas* (*gṛhaṁ*). However, what to speak of the householders of Vraja, even Your ordinary devotees in other places are superior to these *sannyāsī* critics. Attachment, hatred and other material emotions are great thieves because they steal the great treasure of pure bliss from the soul. The rebellious souls are bound by their karma, placed in the prison cell of household life, and tied with foot-shackles to a host of illusions, so that they cannot criticize the Supreme Lord after having lost their wealth.

“O Kṛṣṇa, as long as people do not get the mercy of Your devotees and become Your followers, they remain in this position. However, when they become Your devotees, they develop attachment for *bhakti* and aversion to things obstructing *bhakti*, and then they repose all their love in You. In this way, the thieves of material attraction, hatred and love become sanctified by becoming fixed in You, and then help the devotee by giving him spiritual bliss, knowledge and a host of advantages.

“In that way the same home, which was formerly a prison cell created by favorable and unfavorable *karmic* reactions, becomes for Your devotee a place filled with service to You by hearing and chanting Your glories, and a host of other activities meant to please You. These activities carry one to Your eternal abode. Thus when a devotee awakens his affection for You, then the bewilderment (*mõha*) from objects such as his wife and sons becomes a cause for expressing (*anubhāvas*) his *prema* for You. How can householders like this be compared to ordinary *sannyāsīs*?

“My son Sanat-kumāra criticizes the non-devotee *sannyāsīs* and praises the superiority of the devotee householders in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (4.22.40):

> *kṛcchro mahān iha bhavārṇavam āplaveśāṁ*
>
> *saḍ-varga-nakram asukhena titīrṣanti*
>
> “The ocean of nescience is very difficult to cross because it is infested with many dangerous sharks. Although those who are non-devotees undergo severe austerities and penances to cross that ocean, we recommend that you simply take shelter of the lotus feet of the Lord, which are like boats for crossing the ocean. Although the ocean is difficult to cross, by taking shelter of His lotus feet you will overcome all dangers.”

“The residents of Vraja have thousands of times more love for You than householders who live in other places. Though You are the *pūrṇa brahma*, You show Yourself as dependent upon these *premika-bhaktas* by taking the form of their son, friend or lover to become their submissive servant.”

|| 10.14.37 ||

prapañcaṁ niṣprapañco ’pi viḍambayasi bhū-tale

prapanna-janatānanda-sandohaṁ prathituṁ prabho

TRANSLATION

My dear master, although You have nothing to do with material existence, You come to this earth and imitate material life just to expand the varieties of ecstatic enjoyment for Your surrendered devotees.

COMMENTARY

Some think that the *pūrṇa-brahma* becoming the son of Nanda Mahārāja in Vraja cannot be real or absolute, and that the devotees who accept this are in illusion. In reply to this Brahmā recites this verse: “Though You are always beyond the influence of material nature, You are ever situated within the material world. You assume forms and relationships similar to those found in the material world, but Your relationships are not false and temporary like those of material fathers and sons. Your forms and relationships are completely transcendental and eternally existing. Though Your pastimes are eternal and transcendental, they appear similar to material activities. Why do You need to imitate material activities? You appear in the material world to further increase the bliss that Your devotees taste from relishing Your pastimes.”

Just as a lamp does not shine as brightly in sunlight as it does in the shade, or as a diamond does not look as brilliant on a silver platter as it does on a plate of blue glass, Govinda’s pastimes do not appear as astonishing in Vaikuṇṭha as they do in the material world.

|| 10.14.38 ||

jānanta eva jānantu kiṁ bahūktyā na me prabho

manaso vapuṣo vāco vaibhavaṁ tava go-caraḥ

TRANSLATION

There are people who say, "I know everything about Kṛṣṇa." Let them think that way. As far as I am concerned, I do not wish to speak very much about this matter. O my Lord, let me say this much: As far as Your opulences are concerned, they are all beyond the reach of my mind, body and words.

COMMENTARY

Here Śrī Kṛṣṇa might say: "O Brahmā, if this is all true, then please tell me how many wise philosophers are there like You who can so brilliantly explain everything about My transcendental form, My Vraja devotees, My pastimes and My devotional service?"

Fearing that Śrī Kṛṣṇa might say this, Brahmā then speaks this verse with shame, fear and repentance. Brahmā says, "I am of that category; I am the greatest fool!"

Kṛṣṇa protests, "If that is so, then why have you spoken all these words?"

Brahmā replies, "*Kim bahūktyā*, what is the use of all my words? Speaking too much in Your presence is simply a sign of my foolishness."

Kṛṣṇa: "My dear Brahmā, you are trying to cheat Me with your words."

Brahmā: "Although I have meditated on them, my mind has no power (*na me prabho manaso*) to understand Your opulences. My eyes (*vapuṣā*) cannot grasp Your transcendental form and my words (*vāco*) cannot describe You. As I said previously in verse seven, *guṇātmanas te 'pi guṇān vimātuṁ*, "who can possibly count Your unlimited transcendental qualities?"

Another meaning is: "I cannot grasp the powers of Your mind with my senses. How, then, could I possibly understand the happiness You experience within Yourself (*sākṣāt tavaiva kim utātma-sukhānubhūteh* 10.14.2)? I cannot understand anything about Your body or any of Your words which are the *Vedas*. Indeed, when You are standing before me silently, I cannot speak even a word. In Your presence persons like me are totally insignificant."

|| 10.14.39 ||

anujānīhi māṁ kṛṣṇa sarvaṁ tvaṁ vetsi sarva-dṛk

tvam eva jagatāṁ nātho jagad etat tavārpitam

TRANSLATION

My dear Kṛṣṇa, I now humbly request permission to leave. Actually, You are the knower and seer of all things. Indeed, You are the Lord of all the universes, and yet I offer this one universe unto You.

COMMENTARY

Śrī Kṛṣṇa replied, “Very well, perhaps you do not know the full extent of My power and opulence. Still, I do not know the full extent of your power and opulence either.”

Embarrassed, distraught and incapable of answering anymore, Brahmā speaks this verse: “Please give me permission to leave (*anujānīhi*)! I am not worthy to stay here even for a moment. As I am most fallen I should go to a suitably fallen place like Brahmaloka, my dear *kṛṣṇa*.” Here the word *Kṛṣṇa* means “O Lord, please attract my mind and heart to Vṛndāvana.”

Brahmā continued, “I have prayed that You make me a blade of grass in Gokula (10.14.34), yet You have not responded, even by so much as a glance. Therefore, what more shall I do standing here? It is better that I quickly go away. For I have become an offender by interrupting Your lunch-pastimes on the bank of the Yamunā. Therefore, I could not taste the nectar of even one word from Your lips. Therefore I will quickly depart and go far away. Now please reclaim Your calves, and finish Your pastimes with Your dear friends, joking and laughing with them on the riverbank. Why should I recklessly repeat my request again and again?”

With this intention Brahmā says in this verse, “Indeed, You (*tvam*) know (*vetsi*) everything (*sarvaṁ*) about my mind, body, and senses. Just because I created this universe does not mean that I am its master. You are the master, not only of this one universe but of all universes (*jagatām nātho*). Therefore, I now offer to You this very small universe, which is Your property to begin with. Please do with this universe whatever You wish.”

|| 10.14.40 ||

śrī-kṛṣṇa vṛṣṇi-kula-puṣkara-joṣa-dāyin

kṣmā-nirjara-dvija-paśūdadhi-vṛddhi-kārin

uddharma-śārvara-hara kṣiti-rākṣasa-dhrug

ā-kalpam ārkam arhan bhagavān namas te

TRANSLATION

My dear Śrī Kṛṣṇa, You bestow happiness upon the lotuslike Vṛṣṇi dynasty and expand the great oceans consisting of the earth, the demigods, the brāhmaṇas and the cows. You dispel the dense darkness of irreligion and oppose the demons who have appeared on this earth. O Supreme Personality of Godhead, as long as this universe exists and as long as the sun shines, I will offer my obeisances unto You.

COMMENTARY

Brahmā said, "O Lord, if You don't want to speak to me because I am an offender, then at least show me some mercy by giving the nectar of Your glance. By drinking this nectar I will be able to maintain my life for the rest of the *kalpa*." After expressing this feeling, Brahmā offered his respectful obeisances to Kṛṣṇa.

Referring to Kṛṣṇa's right eye, which is the original form of the sun, Brahmā says, *vṛṣṇi-kula-puṣkara-joṣa-dāyin*, "As the sun You make the lotus flower of the Vṛṣṇi dynasty bloom and fill them with joy. Then, referring to Kṛṣṇa's left eye, which is the original form of the moon, Brahmā says, *kṣmā-nirjara-dvija-paśūdadhi-vṛddhi-kārin*, "O moon, who expands the ocean to nourish all the inhabitants of earth, the demigods (*nirjara*) in Svargaloka, and the birds and cows (*dvija-paśūdadhi*) in Vṛndāvana, please mercifully expand the good fortune of me, the lowest of the demigods.

"With Your two eyes as the sun and moon please dispel the blinding darkness of ignorance (*śārvara-hara*) and mercifully destroy my impiety (*uddharma*), which was seen in my attempt to bewilder even You with my mystic potency. Please remove it so that I will never make such a mistake again." The *Amara-kośa* dictionary says, *śārvaras tv andha-tamasaḥ*, "*Śārvara* means blinding darkness."

"Brahmā said, "O Lord, even though You have killed many demons on the earth (*kṣiti-rākṣasa-dhruk*) such as Aghāsura, nevertheless You gave them residence in Your own spiritual abode. I am also a demon like them. I am a *brahm*a-*rākṣasa* from Satyaloka, who has come to the earth to disturb You and Your intimate friends and calves. Therefore, as You punished the other demons, You should also purify me with punishment. If he sees that his master is either merciful or cruel, the servant is encouraged to continue living. But if he sees that his master is indifferent and does not care at all, then a servant no longer desires to maintain his life."

Then Brahmā thought within his heart, “Alas! Alas! Thinking that it was not proper for my master Kṛṣṇa, who is the most exalted Lord of all lords, to hold a stick, be decorated with *guñjā*, mineral dyes, peacock feathers, and other simple ornaments, and enjoy pastimes with cowherd boys, I foolishly committed an offense to Him and to His friends. Let me beg forgiveness from them.”

In the phrase *ā-kalpam ārkam arhanā- kalpam ārkam arhan bhagavān namas te*, “O Supreme Personality of Godhead, as long as this universe exists and as long as the sun shines, I will offer my obeisances unto You,” the word *ā-kalpam* means “including Your *guñjā* necklace and other ornaments;” *ārkam* means “even the lowly *ārka* tree, which bears flowers that cannot be offered to the Lord.”

Here Brahmā says, “Everything in Vraja, including even Your ornaments and even the lowly *ārka* tree are objects of my worship (*arhan*). O Lord who can be merciful or merciless, who can grant me auspiciousness or trouble, I offer my respectful obeisances (*namas te*) to You.” [Concluding Brahmā’s prayers, Viśvanātha Cakravarti Thakura offers the following prayer]

sarva-saṁśaya-hṛt sarva-bhakti-siddhānta-santatiḥ

astu brahma-stutiś citta-bhittau me cāru-citritā

“May these prayers of Lord Brahmā, which remove all doubts and teach all the definitive conclusions of devotion, remain forever impressed upon my heart.”

|| 10.14.41 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

ity abhiṣṭūya bhūmānaṁ triḥ parikramya pādayoḥ

natvābhīṣṭaṁ jagad-dhātā sva-dhāma pratyapadyata

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having thus offered his prayers, Brahmā circumambulated his worshipable Lord, the unlimited Personality of Godhead, three times and then bowed down at His lotus feet. The appointed creator of the universe then returned to his own residence.

COMMENTARY

What was Brahmā's desire (*ābhīṣṭaṁ*)? Actually he desired to attain Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana. Kṛṣṇa, however, sent Brahmā back to his own home in brahmaloka, which is very dear to him. Brahmā is the creator of the universe, and if he suddenly abandons his post, the universe would not function properly. In the *Vedānta-sūtra* (3.3.14.33) it is said: *yāvad adhikāram avisthitir adhikārikāṇām*, "Authorities should fulfill the duties of their posts for as long as they are assigned." Thus, it is understood that after fulfilling his responsibilities in the post of Brahmā, Brahmā would attain his desired goal of residence in Vṛndāvana.

|| 10.14.42 ||

tato 'nujñāpya bhagavān sva-bhuvaṁ prāg avasthitān

vatsān pulinam āninye yathā-pūrva-sakhaṁ svakam

TRANSLATION

After granting His son Brahmā permission to leave, the Supreme Personality of Godhead took the calves, who were still where they had been a year earlier, and brought them to the riverbank, where He had been taking His meal and where His cowherd boyfriends remained just as before.

COMMENTARY

By remaining silent, Kṛṣṇa gave Brahmā permission to leave. It is said: *maunaṁ sammati-lakṣaṇam*, "Silence means consent." Brahmā had asked permission to go in verse 39: *anujānīhi māṁ kṛṣṇa*. Kṛṣṇa remained silent through the entirety of Brahmā's prayers. Seeing the Lord's silence, Brahmā took that as His permission to depart. Kṛṣṇa could not break His silence because He was playing exactly like an innocent young cowherd boy, the son of the king of Vraja, in the pastime of bewildering Brahmā. Thus Kṛṣṇa's silence here was deliberate.

Kṛṣṇa's searching for the calves and boys was like an actor's assuming a certain role from the beginning to the end of a play. In *Śrimad-Bhāgavatam* 10.13.16 it is said:

> *tato vatsān adṛṣṭvaitya puline 'pi ca vatsapān*
>
> *ubhāv api vane kṛṣṇo vicikāya samantataḥ*
>
> "Thereafter, when Kṛṣṇa was unable to find the calves, He returned to the bank of the river, but there He was also unable to see the cowherd boys. Thus He began to search for both the calves and the boys, as if He could not understand what had happened."

Brahmā began his prayers in verse one with the word *naumīdya*. While the four-headed Brahmā was offering his prayers, Kṛṣṇa maintained His role as a young cowherd boy and thus remained silent. Kṛṣṇa's silence indicates the following thoughts: "Where did this four-headed Brahmā come from? What is he doing? What are these words he keeps on speaking? I am busy looking for My calves. I am just a cowherd boy and do not understand all this."

In this way, by remaining silent throughout Brahmā's prayers, Kṛṣṇa concluded His dramatic performance. Thus, in the presence of His servant Brahmā, Kṛṣṇa pretended to be ignorant of His own powers and opulences. Kṛṣṇa did this like an actor playing a part on the stage. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.13.61) says:

> *tatrodvahat paśupa-vaṁśa-śiśutva-nāṭyaṁ*
>
> *brahmādvayaṁ param anantam agādha-bodham*
>
> *vatsān sakhīn iva purā parito vicinvad*
>
> *ekaṁ sa-pāṇi-kavalaṁ parameṣṭhy acaṣṭa*
>
> "Then Lord Brahmā saw the Absolute Truth—who is one without a second, who possesses full knowledge and who is unlimited— assuming the role (actor: *nātyaṁ*) of a child in a family of cowherd men and standing all alone, just as before, with a morsel of food in His hand, searching everywhere for the calves and His cowherd friends." (SB 10.13.61)

However, being overwhelmed by the *mahā-prema*, great sweetness of love, of Yaśodā and other Vrajavāsīs in *vātsalya-rāsa* and the other rāsas, Kṛṣṇa sees that His own knowledge of His powers and opulences becomes covered. This ignorance is not a pretense; it is real. Therefore, it is not described as *nātyaṁ*, "play-acting."

Kṛṣṇa brought (*āninye*) the calves, who were absorbed in eating grass (*avasthitān*), back to the same place (*prāg*) on the bank (*pulinam*) of the river, where the cowherd boys were sitting in the exactly their same positions (*svakam*) taking lunch. In that place were the original cowherd boys (*yathā-pūrva-sakhaṁ*), who were different from the cowherd boy expansions who performed pastimes for one year with Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.14.43 ||

ekasminn api yāte 'bde prāṇeśaṁ cāntarātmanaḥ

kṛṣṇa-māyāhatā rājan kṣaṇārdhaṁ menire 'rbhakāḥ

TRANSLATION

O King, although the boys had passed an entire year apart from the Lord of their very lives, they had been covered by Lord Kṛṣṇa's illusory potency and thus considered that year merely half a moment.

COMMENTARY

Four verses (43-46) show how the inconceivable power of *yogamāyā* allowed the cowherd boys to be unaware of the passage of one year, and thus conclude their lunch pastimes with Kṛṣṇa, who arrived with a morsel of food in His hand as previously. Without (*antarā*) Kṛṣṇa (*prāṇeśam*), one year became like a moment as they were covered (*āhatā*) by *yogamāyā*. Usually in meeting Kṛṣṇa, a long time seems very short, but in this case, separation from Kṛṣṇa seemed very short due to the influence of *yogamāyā* (*māyā*).

|| 10.14.44 ||

kiṁ kiṁ na vismarantīha māyā-mohita-cetasaḥ

yan-mohitaṁ jagat sarvam abhīkṣṇaṁ vismṛtātmakam

TRANSLATION

What indeed is not forgotten by those whose minds are bewildered by the Lord's illusory potency? By that power of Māyā, this entire universe remains in perpetual bewilderment, and in this atmosphere of forgetfulness no one can understand his own identity.

COMMENTARY

Because it also bewilders the living entity, Kṛṣṇa's external potency Mahāmāyā is given as an example to indicate the power of Kṛṣṇa's spiritual Yogamāyā potency. Here Brahmā says, "As a conditioned soul forgets his spiritual identity (*vismṛta-ātmakam*) due to being bewildered by Kṛṣṇa's external illusory potency, Mahāmāyā, the cowherd boys and calves for one year forgot the suffering of being separated from the Lord because they were bewildered by Kṛṣṇa's internal illusory potency, Yogamāyā.

|| 10.14.45 ||

ūcuś ca suhṛdaḥ kṛṣṇaṁ sv-āgataṁ te 'ti-raṁhasā

naiko 'py abhoji kavala ehītaḥ sādhu bhujyatām

TRANSLATION

The cowherd boyfriends said to Lord Kṛṣṇa: You have returned so quickly! We have not eaten even one morsel in Your absence. Please come here and take Your meal without distraction.

COMMENTARY

After congratulating (*sv-āgatam te*) Kṛṣṇa for having brought the calves back so quickly (*ati-raṁhas*ā) from the forest, the cowherd boys said (*ūcuḥ*), "We thought You would take at least a half an hour to bring back the calves, who had wandered far away, but You have bought them in an instant. Without You we have not eaten a morsel, so please come here."

|| 10.14.46 ||

tato hasan hṛṣīkeśo 'bhyavahṛtya sahārbhakaiḥ

darśayaṁś carmājagaraṁ nyavartata vanād vrajam

TRANSLATION

Then Lord Hṛṣīkeśa, smiling, finished His lunch in the company of His cowherd friends. While they were returning from the forest to their homes in Vraja, Lord Kṛṣṇa showed the cowherd boys the skin of the dead serpent Aghāsura.

COMMENTARY

Smiling (*hasan*) to show His joy, Kṛṣṇa ate with the boys. The word *abhyavahṛtya*, "after finishing their lunch," means that even though a year had passed the food did not show any lack of taste. The word *darśayaṁs*, "showing," means that Kṛṣṇa told His friends: "Look! Here is the dead snake covered with blood." Yogamāyā had carefully preserved the snake's corpse so that the boys would spread the news of the killing of Aghāsura in the village of Vraja. Leaving their forest pastimes (*nyavartata vanād vrajam*), Kṛṣṇa and the boys returned home.

|| 10.14.47 ||

barha-prasūna-vana-dhātu-vicitritāṅgaḥ

proddāma-veṇu-dala-śṛṅga-ravotsavāḍhyaḥ

vatsān gṛṇann anuga-gīta-pavitra-kīrtir

gopī-dṛg-utsava-dṛśiḥ praviveśa goṣṭham

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa's transcendental body was decorated with peacock feathers and flowers and painted with forest minerals, and His bamboo flute loudly and festively resounded. As He called out to His calves by name, His cowherd boyfriends purified the whole world by chanting His glories. Thus Lord Kṛṣṇa entered the cow pasture of His father, Nanda Mahārāja, and the sight of His beauty at once produced a great festival for the eyes of all the cowherd women.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa affectionately (*gṛṇann*) called each of the calves by name. Beholding Kṛṣṇa created a feast for the eyes (*gopī-dṛg-utsava-dṛsiḥ*) of the elder cowherd ladies such as mother Yaśodā, who loved Kṛṣṇa with parental affection, *vātsalya-rasa.*

|| 10.14.48 ||

adyānena mahā-vyālo yaśodā-nanda-sūnunā

hato 'vitā vayaṁ cāsmād iti bālā vraje jaguḥ

TRANSLATION

As the cowherd boys reached the village of Vraja, they sang, "Today Kṛṣṇa saved us by killing a great serpent!" Some of the boys described Kṛṣṇa as the son of Yaśodā, and others as the son of Nanda Mahārāja.

COMMENTARY

The cowherd boys sang, "One snake was killed by this child of Yaśodā and Nanda, or by this small boy who gives fame and bliss. He also saved us from that awesome snake."

Here the word *yaśodā-nanda-sūnunā* means, “He who is the good fortune (*ānanda* or *yaśah*) of Nanda and Yāsodā. Because this is a *sāka-pārthiva karmadhāraya-samāsa*, its middle word is elided. The words *vayam avitāḥ* mean, ‘“We were protected from a great serpent.”

|| 10.14.49 ||

śrī-rājovāca

brahman parodbhave kṛṣṇe iyān premā kathaṁ bhavet

yo ’bhūta-pūrvas tokeṣu svodbhaveṣv api kathyatām

TRANSLATION

King Parīkṣit said: O brāhmaṇa, how could the cowherd women have developed for Kṛṣṇa, someone else’s son, such unprecedented pure love-love they never felt even for their own children? Please explain this.

COMMENTARY

In the previous chapter (13) it was said:

> *vrajaukasāṁ sva-tokeṣu sneha-vally ābdam anvaham*
>
> *śanair niḥsīma vavṛdhe yathā kṛṣṇe tv apūrvavat*
>
> “Although the inhabitants of Vrajabhūmi, the cowherd men and cowherd women, previously had more affection for Kṛṣṇa than for their own children, now, for one year, their affection for their own sons continuously increased, for Kṛṣṇa had now become their sons. There was no limit to the increment of their affection for their sons, who were now Kṛṣṇa. Every day they found new inspiration for loving their children as much as they loved Kṛṣṇa.”

In this way the parents of Vraja had more love for Kṛṣṇa, who was the son of another, than for their own sons. Here King Parīkṣit asks about this, “How is it that this love for Kṛṣṇa appearing as their own sons was not manifested before the pastime of bewildering Brahmā?

Usually parents have more love for their own children, even if others' children have better qualities. What was the cause of this contradiction to normal experience?"

|| 10.14.50 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

sarveṣām api bhūtānāṁ nṛpa svātmaiva vallabhaḥ

itare 'patya-vittādyās tad-vallabhatayaiva hi

TRANSLATION

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O King, for every created being the dearmost thing is certainly his own self. The dearness of everything else—children, wealth and so on—is due only to the dearness of the self.

COMMENTARY

In five verses (50-54) Śukadeva Gosvāmī explains: "O king, in this material world it is seen that the natural tendency is to love oneself more than one's children or other persons one may claim as one's own. By understanding this one will come to understand the final truth."

The word *vallabhaḥ* (dearmost) means "according to material vision, the object of great love." That love is different for each different body, as is affirmed here by the word *itare* (others).

|| 10.14.51 ||

tad rājendra yathā snehaḥ sva-svakātmani dehinām

na tathā mamatālambi-putra-vitta-gṛhādiṣu

TRANSLATION

For this reason, O best of kings, the embodied soul is self-centered: he is more attached to his own body and self than to his so-called possessions like children, wealth and home.

COMMENTARY

The preference for one's own self over attachment to sons, wealth or house is natural.

|| 10.14.52 ||

dehātma-vādināṁ puṁsām api rājanya-sattama

yathā dehaḥ priyatamas tathā na hy anu ye ca tam

TRANSLATION

Indeed, for persons who think the body is the self, O best of kings, those things whose importance lies only in their relationship to the body are never as dear as the body itself.

COMMENTARY

Fools consider the self to be the material body (*deha-ātma-vādināṁ*). To describe the nature of such persons Śukadeva Gosvāmī here declares that the attachment of such persons for their own body (self) is more than for their sons, wealth and house.

|| 10.14.53 ||

deho 'pi mamatā-bhāk cet tarhy asau nātma-vat priyaḥ

yaj jīryaty api dehe 'smin jīvitāśā balīyasī

TRANSLATION

If a person comes to the stage of considering the body "mine" instead of "me," he will certainly not consider the body as dear as his own self. After all, even as the body is growing old and useless, one's desire to continue living remains strong.

COMMENTARY

This verse explains how the materialists, who affirm that the material body is the self, eventually become wise. Then they also understand that self is the soul, not the material body, and the soul is to be loved, not the material body. The body is dear only because of the soul.

When a person who thinks "I am this body" becomes a little wise, he begins to understand, "I am not this body. Rather, this body is mine." At that time the soul

becomes dear to him. Then the material body is not as dear as the soul to him. This means the body is only dear because it has a relationship with the soul.

The second half of this verse gives the direct experience of ordinary persons as evidence to prove this. A person may see that the death of the material body is naturally very painful. Thus he will pray, “Let my death not be painful.” Although such a person may intelligently understand that he is actually a spirit soul and not the material body, still his yearning to remain alive in the material body may be even stronger than that knowledge.

|| 10.14.54 ||

tasmāt priyatamaḥ svātmā sarveṣām api dehinām

tad-artham eva sakalaṁ jagad etac carācaram

TRANSLATION

Therefore it is his own self that is most dear to every embodied living being, and it is simply for the satisfaction of this self that the whole material creation of moving and nonmoving entities exists.

COMMENTARY

Thus it is proved by ordinary vision that everyone loves his own self more than he loves his children or other persons. In the word *carācaram* (moving and nonmoving entities) *cara* refers to wife, children and other persons, and *acara* refers to nonmoving possessions such as one’s clothing, home and household paraphernalia.

|| 10.14.55 ||

kṛṣṇam enam avehi tvam ātmānam akhilātmanām

jagad-dhitāya so ’py atra dehīvābhāti māyayā

TRANSLATION

You should know Kṛṣṇa to be the original Soul of all living entities. For the benefit of the whole universe, He has, out of His causeless mercy, appeared as an ordinary human being. He has done this by the strength of His internal potency.

COMMENTARY

This verse establishes the conclusion of the discussion: “When one sees the truth he realizes that the individual spirit soul is only an intermediate object of love. The final, highest object of love is Śrī Kṛṣṇa alone.”

Brahmā said, “Kṛṣṇa is the soul of the universe and the Supersoul present in the hearts of all conditioned souls.” A person loves children and other persons because they bring pleasure to his own material body. In the same way a person loves his own material body because it brings pleasure to himself, the spirit soul. Also in the same way a person loves his true self, his spiritual identity, because he brings pleasure to the Supersoul. The Supersoul is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, whose spiritual form is perfect and complete. In *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.42) Kṛṣṇa declares: *viṣṭabhyāham idaṁ kṛtsnam, ekāṁśena sthito jagat*, “With a single fragment of Myself I pervade and support this entire creation.”

The conclusion is that because Kṛṣṇa is the highest object of love, the greatest love is felt for Him. Thus the Vraja-gopīs loved Kṛṣṇa even more than they loved their own sons. Furthermore, how can the conditioned souls, who have no love and devotion for Kṛṣṇa, and whose knowledge is covered by *māyā*, directly perceive Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is revealed only by *bhakti*? They cannot directly perceive Kṛṣṇa because such persons have given all their love to their children and others. However, because Vrajavāsīs were beyond the touch of *māyā* and full of love for Kṛṣṇa they could directly perceive the Lord. Thus it was natural that they showed more love for Kṛṣṇa than their own sons.

When Kṛṣṇa appears in the world to benefit the conditioned souls (*jagad-dhitāya*), the ignorant think He has a material body (*dehīvā*) like their own; a body created by *māyā*. But, that is only an appearance, not the fact. Śrī Madhusūdana Sarasvatī explains: *sac-cit-sukaika-vapuṣaḥ puruṣottamasya, nārāyanasya mahimā na hi mānam eti*

“No one can count all the glories of Lord Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, whose form is eternal and full of knowledge and bliss.” He also declares:

> *cid-ānandākāraṁ jalada-ruci-sāraṁ,*
>
> *stitti-girāṁ vraja-strīṇāṁ hāram*
>
> “Kṛṣṇa charms all the women of Vraja. The Vedas declare that Kṛṣṇa’s form, dark like a monsoon cloud, is eternal and full of bliss.”

Someone may object: “The Supersoul cannot be seen by the senses, but Kṛṣṇa was easily seen by everyone. Therefore Kṛṣṇa cannot be the Supersoul.” This verse answers: “To benefit the living entities in the material world, Kṛṣṇa appears, by His causeless and inconceivable mercy, to be an ordinary conditioned soul. Thus Kṛṣṇa is directly perceived by the senses of the conditioned souls, although in ordinary circumstances Kṛṣṇa is never perceived by the material senses.

Lord Nārāyaṇa says in the *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* that though Kṛṣṇa is eternally unmanifest, He becomes visible by His own desire. Otherwise who can see Him? Sanātana Gosvāmī says that Kṛṣṇa becomes manifest by His own power, but He is not revealed to the eye as an object of sense perception. Outside of Vṛndāvana, Kṛṣṇa bestows His sweetness through His mercy to favorable persons. To inimical persons Kṛṣṇa shows His form, but devoid of sweetness for perfecting their meditation involving their material senses. As a result of their meditation, Kṛṣṇa bestows liberation to extinguish their offenses. This is how Kṛṣṇa gives auspiciousness to them.

Although Kṛṣṇa covers His supreme majesty to appear like an ordinary mortal before the inhabitants of Vraja and before inimical persons, it is improper to call Kṛṣṇa a *jīva* with a material body (*dehi*). Therefore this verse describes Kṛṣṇa as *dehīvābhāti*, appearing to be a soul with a human body. Madhvācārya quotes the *Varāha Purāṇa*: “For the Lord there is no difference between the body and soul (*deha* and *dehi*).”

|| 10.14.56 ||

vastuto jānatām atra kṛṣṇaṁ sthāsnu cariṣṇu ca

bhagavad-rūpam akhilaṁ nānyad vastv iha kiñcana

TRANSLATION

Those in this world who understand Lord Kṛṣṇa as He is see all things, whether stationary or moving, as manifest forms of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Such enlightened persons recognize no reality apart from the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

This verse states that after considering all the objects of love such as sons, body and soul, the wise conclude that Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate object of love.

In this verse the word *vastutaḥ* (in truth) has the sense of “but finally.” Therefore, those who know Kṛṣṇa see Him as the cause of all moving and non-moving entities. Because Kṛṣṇa is the creator of all, in one sense. He is the same as His creation.

|| 10.14.57 ||

sarveṣām api vastūnāṁ bhāvārtho bhavati sthitaḥ

tasyāpi bhagavān kṛṣṇaḥ kim atad vastu rūpyatām

TRANSLATION

The original, unmanifested form of material nature is the source of all material things, and the source of even that subtle material nature is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. What, then, could one ascertain to be separate from Him?

COMMENTARY

Someone may ask, “Why is this so?” This verse answers. Bhāva means the unmanifested material nature (*pradhāna*), which is the cause (*ārtho*) of the material world. Thus *bhāvārtho* means Kṛṣṇa, who is the creator of *pradhāna*, which is itself the cause of the material world. Therefore the verse says, *kim atad vastu rūpyatām*, “Who is greater than Kṛṣṇa?”

The word *vastūnām* means the senses and intelligence, and *bhāvārtho* means the *ātmā*, the soul who is the cause of the senses. The cause of the soul is Kṛṣṇa. What can be said to be different from Kṛṣṇa (*kim atad vastu rūpyatām*)? Therefore, because He is the complete whole, Kṛṣṇa is the final object of all service.

|| 10.14.58 ||

samāśritā ye pada-pallava-plavaṁ

mahat-padaṁ puṇya-yaśo murāreḥ

bhavāmbudhir vatsa-padaṁ paraṁ padaṁ

padaṁ padaṁ yad vipadāṁ na teṣām

TRANSLATION

For those who have accepted the boat of the lotus feet of the Lord, who is the shelter of the cosmic manifestation and is famous as Murāri, the enemy of the Mura demon, the ocean of the material world is like the water contained in a calf's hoof-print. Their goal is paraṁ padam, Vaikuṇṭha, the place where there are no material miseries, not the place where there is danger at every step.

COMMENTARY

In this way it is proved that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the final object of pure spiritual love. Only by taking shelter of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet does one get liberated and finally realize Him. The outstanding position of Kṛṣṇa's devotee is now made clear.

Devotees take shelter (*āśritaḥ*) only of the boat (*plavaṁ*) of the lotus feet (*pada-pallava*) of Kṛṣṇa (*murāreḥ*), whose fame (*yaśaḥ*) is charming, beautiful, and pleasing to the heart (*puṇya*).

Someone may ask, "What is that boat like?" The boat of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet gives shelter to the great devotees (*mahat-padam*) who have taken complete shelter (*sam:samyak:samāśritā*). For these devotees the ocean of the material world (*bhavambudhih*) becomes like the water in a calf's hoof-print (*vatsa-padam*) that can be crossed without any great effort. Their goal is the supreme transcendental abode (*paraṁ padaṁ*) of Vaikuṇṭha or Śrī Vṛndāvana. Great devotees never fall into difficulty (*vipadam*) because their minds are not attached to anything except the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.14.59 ||

etat te sarvam ākhyātaṁ yat pṛṣṭo 'ham iha tvayā

tat kaumāre hari-kṛtaṁ paugaṇḍe parikīrtitam

TRANSLATION

Since you inquired from me, I have fully described to you those activities of Lord Hari that were performed in His fifth year but not celebrated until His sixth.

|| 10.14.60 ||

etat suhṛdbhiś caritaṁ murārer aghārdanaṁ śādvala-jemanaṁ ca

vyaktetarad rūpam ajorv-abhiṣṭavaṁ śṛṇvan gṛṇann eti naro 'khilārthān

TRANSLATION

Any person who hears or chants these pastimes Lord Murāri performed with His cowherd friends—the killing of Aghāsura, the taking of lunch on the forest grass, the Lord's manifestation of transcendental forms, and the wonderful prayers offered by Lord Brahmā—is sure to achieve all his spiritual desires.

COMMENTARY

The words *suhṛdbhiḥ-caritaṁ* (pastimes with His intimate friends) refers to pastimes like this one described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.12.5):

> *muṣṇanto 'nyonya-śikyādīn jñātān ārāc ca cikṣipuḥ*
>
> *tatratyāś ca punar dūrād dhasantaś ca punar daduḥ*
>
> "All the cowherd boys used to steal one another's lunch bags. When a boy came to understand that his bag had been taken away, the other boys would throw it farther away, to a more distant place, and those standing there would throw it still farther. When the proprietor of the bag became disappointed, the other boys would laugh, the proprietor would cry, and then the bag would be returned."

The word *vyaktetarad* means supramundane or transcendental. The phrase *ajorv-abhiṣṭavam* can be broken down as *aja*, Lord Brahmā; uru, elaborate; and *abhiṣṭavam*, the offering of prayers. Anyone who hears or chants Brahmā's comprehensive prayers about Kṛṣṇa's transcendental form, His playing with the cowherd boys, killing of Aghāsura, and eating with His friends in the forest covered with lush grass will have all his desires fulfilled.

|| 10.14.61 ||

evaṁ vihāraiḥ kaumāraiḥ kaumāraṁ jahatur vraje

nilāyanaiḥ setu-bandhair markaṭotplavanādibhiḥ

TRANSLATION

In this way the boys spent their childhood in the land of Vṛndāvana playing hide-and-go-seek, building play bridges, jumping about like monkeys and engaging in many other such games.

COMMENTARY

King Parīkṣit had asked the question, *brahman kalantara-krtam, tat-kalinam katham bhavet*, "O great sage, how could things done in the past have been described as being done in the present?"(SB 10.12.41) Kṛṣṇa performed the pastime of killing Aghāsura during His *kaumāra* age. How then, during His *paugaṇḍa* age (beginning from the 5th year), could the boys have described this incident as having happened recently? In these chapters that question has been answered. Now Śukadeva Gosvāmī continues his service of narrating Kṛṣṇa's pastimes.

"Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma spent Their childhood secretly (*jahatuḥ*) in Vraja playing hide and seek (*nilāyanaiḥ*), and enacting the pastimes (*vihāraiḥ*) of other incarnations such as building the bridge to travel, journeying to Lanka, and churning the milk ocean."

iti sarartha-darsinyam, harsinyam bhakta-cetasam

caturdaso 'yam dasame, sangatah sangatah satam

> "As I [Visvanātha Cakravartī Thākura] stay among Kṛṣṇa's devotees, I have thus concluded this com-mentary on the fourteenth chapter of the Tenth Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, named Sārārtha-darśinī, which pleases Kṛṣṇa's devotees.

Thus ends the commentary on the Fourteenth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Fifteen

The Killing of Dhenuka, the Ass Demon

|| 10.15.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

tataś ca pauganḍa-vayaḥ-śrītau vraje babhūvatus tau paśu-pāla-sammatau

gāś cārayantau sakhībhiḥ samaṁ padair vṛndāvanaṁ puṇyam atīva cakratuḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: When Lord Rāma and Lord Kṛṣṇa attained the age of pauganḍa [six to ten] while living in Vṛndāvana, the cowherd men allowed Them to take up the task of tending the cows. Engaging thus in the company of Their friends, the two boys rendered the land of Vṛndāvana most auspicious by imprinting upon it the marks of Their lotus feet.

COMMENTARY

This chapter describes Kṛṣṇa's herding the cows and playing with His friends, His praise of Balarāma, the killing of Dhenukasura, and protecting the cows from the poison of Kāliya.

At the end of Their fifth year, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were permitted to herd the cows. The first day of herding the cows is described in the *Kārttika-māhātmya* section of the *Paḍma Purāṇa*: “The eighth lunar day of the bright fortnight of the month of Kārttika is known by authorities as Gopāṣṭamī. From that day, Śrī Kṛṣṇa served as a cowherd, whereas previously He had tended the calves.”

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma decorated the land of Vraja with Their beautiful footprints, which had the marks of flag and other symbols. This made Vṛndāvana extremely auspicious (*puṇyam*). Previously, since Kṛṣṇa’s feet were very soft and small, the impressions of the flag and other symbols were very faint. However, now the twenty-one marks were very clear. This is indicated by the word *atīva* (extremely). These marks made Vṛndāvana more beautiful than ever.

|| 10.15.2 ||

tan mādhavo veṇum udīrayan vṛto gopair gṛṇadbhiḥ sva-yaśo balānvitaḥ

paśūn puraskṛtya paśavyam āviśad vihartu-kāmaḥ kusumākaraṁ vanam

TRANSLATION

Thus desiring to enjoy pastimes, Lord Mādhava, sounding His flute, surrounded by cowherd boys who were chanting His glories, and accompanied by Lord Baladeva, kept the cows before Him and entered the Vṛndāvana forest, which was full of flowers and rich with nourishment for the animals.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa entered the Vṛndāvana forest (*tat vanam*) which was rich with nourishment for the cows (*paśavyam*). The prefix “a” combined with “*viśad*” means that Kṛṣṇa completely entered the forest of Vṛndāvana, that is, with great absorption. By referring to Kṛṣṇa as Mādhava, which means the spring season, Śukadeva indicates that Kṛṣṇa, like spring, caused the forest to rejoice with fragrant flower blossoms.

|| 10.15.3 ||

tan mañju-ghoṣāli-mṛga-dvijākulaṁ mahan-manaḥ-prakhya-payaḥ-sarasvatā

vātena juṣṭaṁ śata-patra-gandhinā nirīkṣya rantuṁ bhagavān mano dadhe

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Personality of Godhead looked over that forest, which resounded with the charming sounds of bees, animals and birds, and which was enhanced by a lake whose clear water resembled the minds of great souls and by a breeze carrying the fragrance of hundred-petaled lotuses. Seeing all this, Lord Kṛṣṇa decided to enjoy the auspicious atmosphere.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa desired to play upon seeing the beauty of the forest (*tat*) which gave joy to the five senses. How did the forest satisfy the senses? The humming of bees and the melodious singing of deer and birds brought sweet pleasure to the ears. Vṛndāvana was served (*justam*) by gentle lotus-scented breezes carrying the cool moisture of transparent lakes filled to the brim with cool, sweet tasting water like the minds of great devotees. The cool winds thrilled the sense of touch. The sweet water stimulated the sense of taste. The beauty and fragrance of lotus flowers brought spiritual bliss to the eyes and nose.

|| 10.15.4 ||

sa tatra tatrāruṇa-pallava-śriyā phala-prasūnoru-bhareṇa pādayoḥ

spṛśac chikhān vīkṣya vanaspatīn mudā smayann ivāhāgra-jam ādi-pūruṣaḥ

TRANSLATION

The primeval Lord saw that the stately trees, with their beautiful reddish buds and their heavy burden of fruits and flowers, were bending down to touch His feet with the tips of their branches. Thus He smiled gently and addressed His elder brother.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa smiled to see all the trees, with their reddish leaf buds, fruits and flowers, bending down to touch His feet. Kṛṣṇa knew that the trees were actually bowing down to worship Him, but since it was improper to glorify Himself, He smiled in great bliss and praised His elder brother, Balarāma. Thus He addresses Balarāma as *ādi purusa* in verse six.

Kṛṣṇa began to laugh or almost laugh (*smayann iva*) in order to hide His intentions from Balarāma. This is explained in the *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*: “When the sweetness of Vṛndāvana and its inhabitants became prominent in Kṛṣṇa’s mind, He began glorifying them by making Balarāma the object of praise. However, Kṛṣṇa was actually praising

Himself because the verses do not depict Balarāma's glories. Out of *sakhya-bhāva*, Kṛṣṇa speaks His own glories in a joking way in the name of Balarāma."

Though Kṛṣṇa is the younger brother of Balarāma, in this verse Kṛṣṇa is addressed as *ādi-puruṣa* to denote His position as *svayam-bhagavān*, the original Supreme Personality of Godhead.

|| 10.15.5 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

aho amī deva-varāmarārcitaṁ pādāmbujaṁ te sumanaḥ-phalārhaṇam

namanty upādāya śikhābhir ātmanas tamo-'pahatyai taru-janma yat-kṛtam

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: O greatest of Lords, just see how these trees are bowing their heads at Your lotus feet, which are worshipable by the immortal demigods. The trees are offering You their fruits and flowers to eradicate the dark ignorance that has caused their birth as trees.

COMMENTARY

Knowing the minds of the trees who wanted to worship His lotus feet, Kṛṣṇa glanced at the trees and then spoke to Balarāma about their glories as great devotees: "The trees, holding gifts of fruits and flowers on their heads, are bowing down to Your lotus feet with devotion. Why? They bow to purify themselves of their offenses, which caused them to take birth as trees. They are thinking, 'Because we have committed such great offenses, we have become trees and cannot accompany the Lord in His wanderings throughout Vṛndāvana.'"

In this way, Kṛṣṇa interprets the trees' movements, stemming from their attraction to Kṛṣṇa. However, since Brahmā prayed to be born as a tree in Vraja, the trees could not have been born there as a result of offenses.

|| 10.15.6 ||

ete 'linas tava yaśo 'khila-loka-tīrthaṁ

gāyanta ādi-puruṣānupathaṁ bhajante

prāyo amī muni-gaṇā bhavadīya-mukhyā
gūḍhaṁ vane ’pi na jahaty anaghātma-daivam

TRANSLATION

O original personality, these bees must all be great sages and most elevated devotees of Yours, for they are worshiping You by following You along the path and chanting Your glories, which are themselves a holy place for the entire world. Though You have disguised Yourself within this forest, O sinless one, they refuse to abandon You, their worshipable Lord.

COMMENTARY

In two verses Kṛṣṇa glorifies the birds and beasts of the forest: “These bees are following You here and there because they are attracted to the fragrance of Your body. When You go to secret places for Your intimate pastimes where even Your confidential associates cannot go, these bees cannot give You up, but keep following You. Although they follow You to secluded places, You do not become offended by them.” For this reason, Kṛṣṇa addresses Balarāma as *anagha* (sinless one).

“Therefore they must be Your intimate devotees (*bhavadīya mukhya*). Those who concentrate (*muni-gaṇā*) on Your intimate pastimes have become these bees.” Here there is the hint that Balarāma is giving them mercy by permitting them to enter His confidential groves and freely relish the sweet fragrance of His beautiful body.

|| 10.15.7 ||

nṛtyanty amī śikhina īḍya mudā hariṇyaḥ

kurvanti gopya iva te priyam īkṣaṇena

sūktaiś ca kokila-gaṇā gṛham āgatāya

dhanyā vanaukasa iyān hi satāṁ nisargaḥ

TRANSLATION

O worshipable one, these peacocks are dancing before You out of joy, these doe are pleasing You with affectionate glances, just as the gopīs do, and these cuckoos are honoring You with Vedic prayers. All these residents of the forest

are most fortunate, and their behavior toward You certainly befits great souls receiving another great soul at home.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “As You enter the forest the cuckoos welcome You with sweet sounds (*suktaiḥ*), the peacocks dance, and the deer glance affectionately in an attempt to please You (*priyam kurvanti*). It is the nature (*nisargaḥ*) of a cultured person to receive a saintly person with dance, affectionate glances and sweet words.”

|| 10.15.8 ||

dhanyeyam adya dharaṇī tṛṇa-vīrudhas tvat-

pāda-spṛśo druma-latāḥ karajābhimṛṣṭāḥ

nadyo ’drayaḥ khaga-mṛgāḥ sadayāvalokair

gopyo ’ntareṇa bhujayor api yat-spṛhā śrīḥ

TRANSLATION

This earth has now become most fortunate, because You have touched her grass and bushes with Your feet and her trees and creepers with Your fingernails, and because You have graced her rivers, mountains, birds and animals with Your merciful glances. But above all, You have embraced the young cowherd women between Your two arms—a favor hankered after by the goddess of fortune herself.

COMMENTARY

After glorifying Balarāma by describing the service of the trees and animals, Kṛṣṇa praised Him by showing how others are attracted to Him for showing them mercy.

The phrase “today the earth has become fortunate” means “In material time there is a succession of *avatāras* such as Varāha, but nothing can equal the blessings of Kṛṣṇa and His plenary expansion, Balarāma. The earth has now become most fortunate because You have touched her grass with Your feet, and plucked her flowers with Your fingernails. The rivers and mountains have become fortunate by Your merciful glances (*sadaya avalokair*), or by Your glances which bring about auspiciousness (*sat aya avalokana*). The dark creepers (*gopyo*) which beauty itself beautifies (*yat spṛhā śrīḥ*) are fortunate because they are touching Your chest.”

The word *gopyo* can also mean the *gopīs*. Thus the meaning can also be: “The *gopīs* are fortunate because You directly embrace them to Your chest, which is desired even by Laksmī (*śrī*).”

The *Purāṇas* explain that although Laksmī is situated on the chest of Nārāyaṇa, the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha, she once desired to be embraced on the chest of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and thus she performed severe austerities to achieve this blessing. Śrī Kṛṣṇa informed Laksmī that her actual place was Vaikuṇṭha, and that it was impossible for her to dwell upon His chest in Vṛndāvana. However, Kṛṣṇa favored Laksmī by allowing her to remain on His chest in the form of a golden line.

|| 10.15.9 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

evaṁ vṛndāvanaṁ śrīmat kṛṣṇaḥ prīta-manāḥ paśūn

reme sañcārayann adreḥ sarid-rodhaḥsu sānugaḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus expressing His satisfaction with the beautiful forest of Vṛndāvana and its inhabitants, Lord Kṛṣṇa enjoyed tending the cows and other animals with His friends on the banks of the river Yamunā below Govardhana Hill.

COMMENTARY

The word *evaṁ* means “thus describing Vṛndāvana in this way,” or “having thus satisfied His older brother.”

Inspired by His own words, “the gopīs were fortunate for having attained Balarāma’s chest,” Kṛṣṇa called out to Balarāma, the boys and the cows: “After resting here at Govardhana for a short time, You should all proceed to the bank of the Yamunā and play for sometime. I will come soon.”

Though Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were inseparable during Their *paugaṇḍa* age (five to ten), with the appearance of the *kaiśora* age (11-15) Kṛṣṇa began His amorous pastimes alone

with the *gopīs*. This is indicated in this verse by the word "*evam*." After praising Balarāma and sending Him off to herd the cows in the forest of Vṛndāvana, Kṛṣṇa, to whom Rādhā (*śrīmat*) shows Her love (*prītaḥ*), came to Mānasa (*manāḥ*) Gaṅgā (*adreḥ sarit*), and began to enjoy (*reme*) with the *sakhīs* (*sa-anuga*). The word "*śrīmat*" refers to the chief woman of Vraja, Śrīmati Rādhikā.

Because this meaning is confidential there is another meaning which covers this jewel like a golden case. *Śrīmat* can refer to Baladeva. Out of affection for Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa began sporting with His friends on the bank of Mānasa Gaṅgā.

|| 10.15.10-12 ||

kvacid gāyati gāyatsu madāndhāliṣv anuvrataiḥ

upagīyamāna-caritaḥ pathi saṅkarṣaṇānvitaḥ

anujalpati jalpantaṁ kala-vākyaiḥ śukaṁ kvacit

kvacit sa-valgu kūjantam anukūjati kokilam

kvacic ca kāla-haṁsānām anukūjati kūjitam

abhinṛtyati nṛtyantaṁ barhiṇaṁ hāsayan kvacit

megha-gambhīrayā vācā nāmabhir dūra-gān paśūn

kvacid āhvayati prītyā go-gopāla-manojñayā

TRANSLATION

Sometimes the honeybees in Vṛndāvana became so mad with ecstasy that they closed their eyes and began to sing. Lord Kṛṣṇa, moving along the forest path with His cowherd boyfriends and Baladeva, would then respond to the bees by imitating their singing while His friends sang about His pastimes. Sometimes Lord Kṛṣṇa would imitate the chattering of a parrot, sometimes, with a sweet voice, the call of a cuckoo, and sometimes the cooing of swans. Sometimes He vigorously imitated the dancing of a peacock, making His cowherd boyfriends laugh. Sometimes, with a voice as deep as the rumbling of clouds, He would call out with great affection the names of the animals who had wandered far from the herd, thus enchanting the cows and the cowherd boys.

COMMENTARY

When Kṛṣṇa would imitate the dancing of the peacocks (*barhiṇaṁ abhi nṛtyati*), the peacocks would dance more enthusiastically and the boys would laugh heartily.

|| 10.15.13 ||

cakora-krauñca-cakrāhva-bhāradvājāṁś ca barhiṇaḥ

anurauti sma sattvānāṁ bhīta-vad vyāghra-siṁhayoḥ

TRANSLATION

Sometimes He would cry out in imitation of birds such as the cakoras, krauñcas, cakrāhvas, bhāradvājas and peacocks, and sometimes He would run away with the smaller animals in mock fear of lions and tigers.

COMMENTARY

Upon hearing the roar of the tiger and lion (*sattvānāṁ*), Kṛṣṇa appeared fearful (*bhīta-avat*) and fled with the other cowherd boys. This means that when the boys fled on hearing the sounds that Kṛṣṇa made, Kṛṣṇa also fled as if in fear.

|| 10.15.14 ||

kvacit krīḍā-pariśrāntaṁ gopotsaṅgopabarhaṇam

svayaṁ viśramayaty āryaṁ pāda-saṁvāhanādibhiḥ

TRANSLATION

When His elder brother, fatigued from playing, would lie down with His head upon the lap of a cowherd boy, Lord Kṛṣṇa would help Him relax by personally massaging His feet and offering other services.

COMMENTARY

When Balarāma became tired of playing, He lay down using the lap of a cowherd boy as a pillow (*upabarhaṇam*) to rest His head.

|| 10.15.15 ||

nṛtyato gāyataḥ kvāpi valgato yudhyato mithaḥ

gṛhīta-hastau gopālān hasantau praśaśaṁsatuḥ

TRANSLATION

Sometimes, as the cowherd boys danced, sang, moved about and playfully fought with each other, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, standing nearby hand in hand, would glorify Their friends' activities and laugh.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma would laugh while glorifying the dancing, singing, jumping and fighting of the cowherd boys.

|| 10.15.16 ||

kvacit pallava-talpeṣu niyuddha-śrama-karśitaḥ

vṛkṣa-mūlāśrayaḥ śete gopotsaṅgopabarhaṇaḥ

TRANSLATION

Sometimes Lord Kṛṣṇa grew tired from fighting and lay down at the base of a tree, resting upon a bed made of soft twigs and buds and using the lap of a cowherd friend as His pillow.

|| 10.15.17 ||

pāda-saṁvāhanaṁ cakruḥ kecit tasya mahātmanaḥ

apare hata-pāpmāno vyajanaiḥ samavījayan

TRANSLATION

Some of the cowherd boys, who were all great souls, would then massage His lotus feet, and others, qualified by being free of all sin, would expertly fan the Supreme Lord.

|| 10.15.18 ||

anye tad-anurūpāṇi manojñāni mahātmanaḥ

gāyanti sma mahā-rāja sneha-klinna-dhiyaḥ śanaiḥ

TRANSLATION

My dear King, other boys would sing enchanting songs appropriate to the occasion, and their hearts would melt out of love for the Lord.

COMMENTARY

The boys sang songs suitable to the particular pastime (*tad anurūpāni*).

|| 10.15.19 ||

evaṁ nigūḍhātma-gatiḥ sva-māyayā gopātmajatvaṁ caritair viḍambayan

reme ramā-lālita-pāda-pallavo grāmyaiḥ samaṁ grāmya-vad īśa-ceṣṭitaḥ

TRANSLATION

In this way the Supreme Lord, whose soft lotus feet are personally attended by the goddess of fortune, concealed His transcendental opulences by His internal potency and acted like the son of a cowherd. Yet even while enjoying like a village boy in the company of other village residents, He often exhibited feats only God could perform.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa covered His transcendental opulences with His internal potency *yogamāyā*, and played as a simple cowherd boy, despite being the son of a king. The word *gopa* can mean protector of the earth as well as protector of the cows. Though His lotus feet are constantly served by the goddess of fortune, Kṛṣṇa hid that fact and played like an ordinary boy with His friends. Kṛṣṇa usually concealed His unlimited powers, but sometimes He displayed amazing prowess (*īśa ceṣṭitaḥ*) when engaged in such pastimes as killing demons.

|| 10.15.20 ||

śrīdāmā nāma gopālo rāma-keśavayoḥ sakhā

subala-stokakṛṣṇādyā gopāḥ premṇedam abruvan

TRANSLATION

Once, some of the cowherd boys—Śrīdāmā, the very close friend of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, along with Subala, Stokakṛṣṇa and others—lovingly spoke the following words.

COMMENTARY

This verse begins a description of the power (*īśa ceṣṭitaḥ*) of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma mentioned in the previous verse. The word *premṇa*, "with love," indicates that the request the cowherd boys are about to make is motivated by love for Kṛṣṇa, not selfish desire. Thus under the guise of wanting to get the *tāla* fruits for themselves, the cowherd boys actually wanted to offer the delicious fruits to Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma.

|| 10.15.21 ||

rāma rāma mahā-bāho kṛṣṇa duṣṭa-nibarhaṇa

ito 'vidūre su-mahad vanaṁ tālāli-saṅkulam

TRANSLATION

[The cowherd boys said:] O Rāma, Rāma, mighty-armed one! O Kṛṣṇa, destroyer of the miscreants! Not far from here is a very great forest filled with rows of palm trees.

COMMENTARY

"Within a short distance of eight miles from Govardhana, there is a very large forest called Tālāli."

The *Varāha Purāṇa* says: "About one *yojana* [eight miles] west of Mathurā is the forest known as Tālavana." This should be understood to be southwest, as that is where it actually lies. There is a forest filled with *tāla* trees (*tāla ali*). Or *ali* can mean bees.

|| 10.15.22 ||

phalāni tatra bhūrīṇi patanti patitāni ca

santi kintv avaruddhāni dhenukena durātmanā

TRANSLATION

In that Tālavana forest many fruits are falling from the trees, and many are already lying on the ground. But all the fruits are being guarded by the evil Dhenuka.

COMMENTARY

The cowherd boys said, “The trees are dark in color like honeybees, and thus they must have very tasty fruits. But the fruits are under the control (*avaruddhāni*) of Dhenukasura. O Rāma, this is a test of Your valor! O Kṛṣṇa, let us see how You vanquish evil. The *sakhya-bhāva* we have for You will not be restricted by this show of power, rather Your show of courage (*vīra-rasa*) will increase our *sakhya-rasa*.”

|| 10.15.23 ||

so ’ti-vīryo ’suro rāma he kṛṣṇa khara-rūpa-dhṛk

ātma-tulya-balair anyair jñātibhir bahubhir vṛtaḥ

TRANSLATION

O Rāma, O Kṛṣṇa! Dhenuka is a most powerful demon and has assumed the form of an ass. He is surrounded by many friends who have assumed a similar shape and who are just as powerful as he.

|| 10.15.24 ||

tasmāt kṛta-narāhārād bhītair nṛbhir amitra-han

na sevyate paśu-gaṇaiḥ pakṣi-saṅghair vivarjitam

TRANSLATION

The demon Dhenuka has eaten men alive, and therefore all people and animals are terrified of going to the Tāla forest. O killer of the enemy, even the birds are afraid to fly there.

COMMENTARY

The cowherd boys incite Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma’s fighting spirit by describing the demon’s strength: “But in front of You two, the bravery of the demon and His cohorts will become like flowers in the sky. Let us go, relieve the residents of their fear, and shower Your

blessings upon those who want to enjoy the *tāla* fruits." This is the intention of this verse.

|| 10.15.25 ||

vidyante 'bhukta-pūrvāṇi phalāni surabhīṇi ca

eṣa vai surabhir gandho viṣūcīno 'vagṛhyate

TRANSLATION

In the Tāla forest are sweet-smelling fruits no one has ever tasted. Indeed, even now we can smell the fragrance of the tāla fruits spreading all about.

COMMENTARY

"In which direction is the Tālavana forest?" This verse answers: "The sweet fragrance of the *tāla* fruits was carried by the easterly winds of the month of Bhādra [August-September]. Thus the forest is east of here."

|| 10.15.26 ||

prayaccha tāni naḥ kṛṣṇa gandha-lobhita-cetasām

vāñchāsti mahatī rāma gamyatāṁ yadi rocate

TRANSLATION

O Kṛṣṇa! Please get those fruits for us. Our minds are so attracted by their aroma! Dear Balarāma, our desire to have those fruits is very great. If You think it's a good idea, let's go to that Tāla forest.

COMMENTARY

"O Kṛṣṇa! Give the fruits to us, because we have a great desire for them."

|| 10.15.27 ||

evaṁ suhṛd-vacaḥ śrutvā suhṛt-priya-cikīrṣayā

prahasya jagmatur gopair vṛtau tālavanaṁ prabhū

TRANSLATION

Hearing the words of Their dear companions, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma laughed and, desiring to please them, set off for the Tālavana surrounded by Their cowherd boyfriends.

COMMENTARY

“How can a donkey be so strong? That is impossible.” Therefore Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma laughed loudly, thinking Their friends must be telling a lie.

|| 10.15.28 ||

balaḥ praviśya bāhubhyāṁ tālān samparikampayan

phalāni pātayām āsa mataṅ-gaja ivaujasā

TRANSLATION

Lord Balarāma entered the Tāla forest first. Then with His two arms He began forcefully shaking the trees with the power of a maddened elephant, causing the tāla fruits to fall to the ground.

|| 10.15.29 ||

phalānāṁ patatāṁ śabdaṁ niśamyāsura-rāsabhaḥ

abhyadhāvat kṣiti-talaṁ sa-nagaṁ parikampayan

TRANSLATION

Hearing the sound of the falling fruits, the ass demon Dhenuka ran forward to attack, making the earth and trees tremble.

COMMENTARY

The earth shook along with the trees (*sa-nagaṁ*) as Dhenukasura ran towards Balarāma.

|| 10.15.30 ||

sametya tarasā pratyag dvābhyāṁ padbhyāṁ balaṁ balī

nihatyorasi kā-śabdaṁ muñcan paryasarat khalaḥ

TRANSLATION

The powerful demon rushed up to Lord Baladeva and sharply struck the Lord's chest with the hooves of his hind legs. Then Dhenuka began to run about, braying loudly.

COMMENTARY

After kicking Balarāma in the chest with His hind legs, Dhenuka ran around (*paryasarat*) making ugly braying sounds (*kā-śabda*).

|| 10.15.31 ||

punar āsādya saṁrabdha upakroṣṭā parāk sthitaḥ

caraṇāv aparau rājan balāya prākṣipad ruṣā

TRANSLATION

Moving again toward Lord Balarāma, O King, the furious ass situated himself with his back toward the Lord. Then, screaming in rage, the demon hurled his two hind legs at Him.

COMMENTARY

The furious (*saṁrabdhaḥ*) ass showed his back toward Balarāma and screamed in rage.

|| 10.15.32 ||

sa taṁ gṛhītvā prapador bhrāmayitvaika-pāṇinā

cikṣepa tṛṇa-rājāgre bhrāmaṇa-tyakta-jīvitam

TRANSLATION

Lord Balarāma seized Dhenuka by his hooves, whirled him about with one hand and threw him into the top of a palm tree. The violent wheeling motion killed the demon.

COMMENTARY

Balarāma seized Dhenukasura (*tam*) by his hooves (*prapadayoḥ*), whirled him around, and threw him in the top of a *tāla* tree (*tṛṇa rājaḥ*).

|| 10.15.33 ||

tenāhato mahā-tālo vepamāno bṛhac-chirāḥ

pārśva-sthaṁ kampayan bhagnaḥ sa cānyaṁ so 'pi cāparam

TRANSLATION

Lord Balarāma threw the dead body of Dhenukāsura into the tallest palm tree in the forest, and when the dead demon landed in the treetop, the tree began shaking. The great palm tree, causing a tree by its side also to shake, broke under the weight of the demon. The neighboring tree caused yet another tree to shake, and this one struck yet another tree, which also began shaking. In this way many trees in the forest shook and broke.

|| 10.15.34 ||

balasya līlayotsṛṣṭa-khara-deha-hatāhatāḥ

tālāś cakampire sarve mahā-vāteritā iva

TRANSLATION

Because of Lord Balarāma's pastime of throwing the body of the ass demon into the top of the tallest palm tree, all the trees began shaking and striking against one another as if blown about by powerful winds.

COMMENTARY

The heavy body of Dhenakasura made all the *tāla* trees shake severely as if blown by strong winds.

|| 10.15.35 ||

naitac citraṁ bhagavati hy anante jagad-īśvare

ota-protam idaṁ yasmiṁs tantuṣv aṅga yathā paṭaḥ

TRANSLATION

My dear Parīkṣit, that Lord Balarāma killed Dhenukāsura is not such a wonderful thing, considering that He is the unlimited Personality of Godhead, the controller of the entire universe. Indeed, the entire cosmos rests upon Him just as a woven cloth rests upon its own horizontal and vertical threads.

COMMENTARY

This was not astonishing for Baladeva, who supports the entire universe just as woven cloth rests upon its own horizontal and vertical threads.

|| 10.15.36 ||

tataḥ kṛṣṇaṁ ca rāmaṁ ca jñātayo dhenukasya ye

kroṣṭāro 'bhyadravan sarve saṁrabdhā hata-bāndhavāḥ

TRANSLATION

The other ass demons, close friends of Dhenukāsura, were enraged upon seeing his death, and thus they all immediately ran to attack Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma.

|| 10.15.37 ||

tāṁs tān āpatataḥ kṛṣṇo rāmaś ca nṛpa līlayā

gṛhīta-paścāc-caraṇān prāhiṇot tṛṇa-rājasu

TRANSLATION

O King, as the demons attacked, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma easily seized them one after another by their hind legs and threw them all into the tops of the palm trees.

|| 10.15.38 ||

phala-prakara-saṅkīrṇaṁ daitya-dehair gatāsubhiḥ

rarāja bhūḥ sa-tālāgrair ghanair iva nabhas-talam

TRANSLATION

The earth then appeared beautifully covered with heaps of fruits and with the dead bodies of the demons, which were entangled in the broken tops of the palm trees. Indeed, the earth shone like the sky decorated with clouds.

COMMENTARY

The earth appeared splendid with the piles of dark blue *tāla* fruits spread out everywhere. The bodies of the dead demons looked like dark blue clouds resting in the broken branches of the *tāla* trees, which appeared as splendid as red clouds covering the sky at sunset due to being tinged with the red blood of the demons.

|| 10.15.39 ||

tayos tat su-mahat karma niśamya vibudhādayaḥ

mumucuḥ puṣpa-varṣāṇi cakrur vādyāni tuṣṭuvuḥ

TRANSLATION

Hearing of this magnificent feat of the two brothers, the demigods and other elevated living beings rained down flowers and offered music and prayers in glorification.

|| 10.15.40 ||

atha tāla-phalāny ādan manuṣyā gata-sādhvasāḥ

tṛṇaṁ ca paśavaś cerur hata-dhenuka-kānane

TRANSLATION

People now felt free to return to the forest where Dhenuka had been killed, and without fear they ate the fruits of the palm trees. Also, the cows could now graze freely upon the grass there.

COMMENTARY

The Pulindas and other low-class people of Vṛndāvana ate the *tāla* fruits. Kṛṣṇa's cowherd boys, however, considered the fruits detestable, since they had been contaminated with the blood of the asses.

|| 10.15.41 ||

kṛṣṇaḥ kamala-patrākṣaḥ puṇya-śravaṇa-kīrtanaḥ

stūyamāno 'nugair gopaiḥ sāgrajo vrajam āvrajat

TRANSLATION

Then lotus-eyed Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, whose glories are most pious to hear and chant, returned home to Vraja with His elder brother, Balarāma. Along the way, the cowherd boys, His faithful followers, chanted His glories.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa's return home to Vraja is described in three verses.

"Kṛṣṇa, who enchants the hearts of all the Vrajavāsīs, whose lotus petal eyes attract the eyes of all, and whose flute songs (*kīrtana*) create good fortune (*puṇya*) for the ears (*śravaṇa*) returned home to Vraja amidst the cowherd boys who were chanting His glories."

|| 10.15.42 ||

taṁ gorajaś-churita-kuntala-baddha-barha-

vanya-prasūna-rucirekṣaṇa-cāru-hāsam

veṇum kvaṇantam anugair upagīta-kīrtiṁ

gopyo didṛkṣita-dṛśo 'bhyagaman sametāḥ

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa's hair, powdered with the dust raised by the cows, was decorated with a peacock feather and forest flowers. The Lord glanced charmingly and smiled beautifully, playing upon His flute while His companions chanted His glories. The gopīs, all together, came forward to meet Him, their eyes very eager to see Him.

COMMENTARY

In this verse the Vraja-gopīs are described in particular. "The young *gopīs* came forward to meet Kṛṣṇa, whose locks of hair were powdered with the dust raised by the cows and decorated with forest flowers and a peacock feather, and who glanced charmingly and smiled attractively."

Another meaning: "Kṛṣṇa's glance emitted a beautiful smile. The *gopīs*' eyes had a strong desire to see Kṛṣṇa, so they could not follow the order of their minds to give up watching Kṛṣṇa because of shyness. Becoming independent and jealous of the ears' hearing Kṛṣṇa's flute and the nostrils' smelling His fragrance, the eyes gave up the shelter of the *gopīs* and went to Kṛṣṇa by themselves in order to gain the treasure of Kṛṣṇa's charming glances. While leaving their houses to go forward to Kṛṣṇa, the *gopīs* said to their husbands, 'Are you going to stop me or kill me?'"

|| 10.15.43 ||

pītvā mukunda-mukha-sāragham akṣi-bhṛṅgais

tāpaṁ jahur viraha-jaṁ vraja-yoṣito 'hni

tat sat-kṛtiṁ samadhigamya viveśa goṣṭhaṁ

savrīḍa-hāsa-vinayaṁ yad apāṅga-mokṣam

TRANSLATION

With their beelike eyes, the women of Vṛndāvana drank the honey of the beautiful face of Lord Mukunda, and thus they gave up the distress they had felt during the day because of separation from Him. The young Vṛndāvana ladies cast sidelong glances at the Lord—glances filled with bashfulness, laughter and submission—and Śrī Kṛṣṇa, completely accepting these glances as a proper offering of respect, entered the cowherd village.

COMMENTARY

What did the gopīs do when they approached Kṛṣṇa? This verse answers the question. With their beelike eyes the Vraja-gopīs drank the honey (*sāragham*) of Mukunda's beautiful sweet face. The gopīs, who were not seen by Kṛṣṇa, did not just glance upon Him, but they stared at Kṛṣṇa with wide open eyes when no one was looking. Then upon catching Kṛṣṇa's attention, those *gopīs* broke into smiles out of joy. But due to bashfulness they stopped their open eyes and smiles by covering their mouths with their left hands and pulling their veils over their eyes. This showed the *gopīs*' sense of submission (*vinayaṁ*). Thus the *gopīs* displayed all the moods of chaste girls, who look upon their beloveds with shyness, jubilation and submission.

Taking their gazing as an offering (*tat sat-kṛti*) from their hearts, Kṛṣṇa became aware of the great sweetness of the gopīs' love. Fully accepting (*samadhigamya*) those glances with complete relish, that supreme master of romantic arts entered the village of Vraja.

There is a meaning in the two actions of offering and accepting the bashful smiling. The gopīs' offering of respect was their bashful laughing, submission and sidelong glances (*apāṇga mokṣa*). Kṛṣṇa accepted their offering by responding with enchanting glances.

One can elaborate on the scene as follows. Taking the flower of their glances offered by their servants called the *sañcāri-bhāva* of enthusiasm in the hands of their eyes, and taking the flower of their smiles offered by the servants called the *sañcāri-bhāva* of joy in their hands made of their delicate lips, the Vraja-gopīs approached Kṛṣṇa saying, "Please accept these offerings, which are all that we have in our house."

When Kṛṣṇa engaged His servant in the form of His glance to accept the gifts, His crafty glance became eager to steal the gifts, which were previously kept within the *gopīs'* houses. Therefore Kṛṣṇa withdrew His glance to Himself. When the *gopīs* offered these gifts again, Kṛṣṇa's glance freed itself, and quickly approached the *gopīs* to steal the two gifts with the vigor of a warrior.

But then a *śakhi* in the form of bashfulness, who has the power to cover things, suddenly appeared and hid the two gifts. Then another *śakhi* named *vinaya* (submission) arrived, and a fight broke out between them. Kṛṣṇa's servant in the form of His glance, however, forcibly took the gift of the *gopīs'* glances along with their bashfulness and submission, and offered them to Kṛṣṇa. Receiving these three like a precious jewel, Kṛṣṇa carefully placed them upon the altar in the temple of His heart. This is the implication of the word *sat-kṛtim* (offering). Although bashfulness and other words have their own power of implication, because *sat-kṛtim* and *mokṣa* have such deep meanings they have been explained here in detail.

Another meaning is as follows: As Kṛṣṇa respectfully (*sat-kṛtim*) accepted the *gopīs*' shy glances (*apāṅga mokṣa*), which were like bashfully controlled smiles, and entered the village, the young women of Vraja gave up the pain of separation (*viraha-jaṁ*) they had felt from Him during the day.

|| 10.15.44 ||

tayor yaśodā-rohiṇyau putrayoḥ putra-vatsale

yathā-kāmaṁ yathā-kālaṁ vyadhattāṁ paramāśiṣaḥ

TRANSLATION

Mother Yaśodā and mother Rohiṇī, acting most affectionately toward their two sons, offered all the best things to Them in response to Their every desire and at the various appropriate times.

COMMENTARY

Mother Yaśodā and Rohiṇī lovingly offered varieties of wonderful food (*param āśiṣa*) for the pleasure (*yathā-kāmaṁ*) of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. They also made sure the boys ate at the proper time (*yathā-kālaṁ*), rather than forbidden times like sunset.

|| 10.15.45 ||

gatādhvāna-śramau tatra majjanonmardanādibhiḥ

nīvīṁ vasitvā rucirāṁ divya-srag-gandha-maṇḍitau

TRANSLATION

By being bathed and massaged, the two young Lords were relieved of the weariness caused by walking on the country roads. Then They were dressed in attractive robes and decorated with transcendental garlands and fragrances.

COMMENTARY

Actually Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were *aśramau* (not weary) because They are God. However, playing the part of humans They appeared tired and thus the word *śramau* is used. After entering Their house, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were relieved (*gataḥ*) of Their apparent tiredness from walking on the road (*adhvān*) by bathing and dressing in attractive robes (*nīvīṁ*).

|| 10.15.46 ||

janany-upahṛtaṁ prāśya svādy annam upalālitau

saṁviśya vara-śayyāyāṁ sukhaṁ suṣupatur vraje

TRANSLATION

After dining sumptuously on the delicious food given Them by Their mothers and being pampered in various ways, the two brothers lay down upon Their excellent beds and happily went to sleep in the village of Vraja.

|| 10.15.47 ||

evaṁ sa bhagavān kṛṣṇo vṛndāvana-caraḥ kvacit

yayau rāmam ṛte rājan kālindīṁ sakhībhir vṛtaḥ

TRANSLATION

O King, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa thus wandered about the Vṛndāvana area, performing His pastimes. Once, surrounded by His boyfriends, He went without Balarāma to the Yamunā River.

COMMENTARY

After finishing the description of the Gopāṣṭamī pastimes in Kārttika, the pastimes in summer are told. Balarāma was not present because Rohiṇī kept Him home to take a *śānti* bath on His birthday.

|| 10.15.48 ||

atha gāvaś ca gopāś ca nidāghātapa-pīḍitāḥ

duṣṭaṁ jalaṁ papus tasyās tṛṣṇārtā viṣa-dūṣitam

TRANSLATION

At that time the cows and cowherd boys were feeling acute distress from the glaring summer sun. Afflicted by thirst, they drank the water of the Yamunā River. But it had been contaminated with poison.

COMMENTARY

Ignoring Kṛṣṇa, who was walking slowly behind, the cows ran quickly towards the Yamunā to slake their intense thirst. The cowherd boys ran after them.

|| 10.15.49-50 ||

viṣāmbhas tad upaspṛśya daivopahata-cetasaḥ

nipetur vyasavaḥ sarve salilānte kurūdvaha

vīkṣya tān vai tathā-bhūtān kṛṣṇo yogeśvareśvaraḥ

īkṣayāmṛta-varṣiṇyā sva-nāthān samajīvayat

TRANSLATION

As soon as they touched the poisoned water, all the cows and boys lost their consciousness by the divine power of the Lord and fell lifeless at the water's edge. O hero of the Kurus, seeing them in such a condition, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the master of all masters of mystic potency, felt compassion for these devotees, who had no Lord other than Him. Thus He immediately brought them back to life by showering His nectarean glance upon them.

COMMENTARY

The word *daiva* means "belonging to deva, the Lord." The cows and cowherd boys, whose intelligence was covered by Kṛṣṇa's *līlā-śakti*, appeared to lose their lives (*daiva upahata cetasaḥ*), though they are eternal. Kṛṣṇa covered them with His *yogamāyā* potency to perfect His pastimes.

|| 10.15.51 ||

te sampratīta-smṛtayaḥ samutthāya jalāntikāt

āsan su-vismitāḥ sarve vīkṣamāṇāḥ parasparam

TRANSLATION

Regaining their full consciousness, the cows and boys stood up out of the water and began to look at one another in great astonishment.

COMMENTARY

Returning to consciousness, the cowherd boys thought, “We were dead, so how did we come back to life? What medicine or *mantra* was used to remove the poison?” Thus looking at one another with great surprise, they spoke with their eyes, “Friend! Do you know the secret?”

Then one *sakhā* answered with a glance, “I know how we were saved.” Then he spoke, “Listen! I remember the name giving ceremony of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma wherein Gargācārya said, ‘This child will very easily save you from all dangers.’ This is the secret.”

Then with complete absorption (*sam*) all the cowherd boys remembered (*smṛtayaḥ*) Kṛṣṇa, their most lovable object (*pratīta*). By this they all became astonished (*su-vismitāḥ*).

|| 10.15.52 ||

anvamaṁsata tad rājan govindānugrahekṣitam

pītvā viṣaṁ paretasya punar utthānam ātmanaḥ

TRANSLATION

O King, the cowherd boys then considered that although they had drunk poison and in fact had died, simply by the merciful glance of Govinda they had regained their lives and stood up by their own strength.

COMMENTARY

The cowherd boys concluded positively that although they had drunk poison and died, they were revived by the merciful glance of Govinda, who was empowered by Lord Nārāyaṇa, the worshipable deity of Nanda Mahārāja.

Thus ends the commentary on the Fifteenth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Sixteen

Kṛṣṇa Chastises the Serpent Kāliya

|| 10.16.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

vilokya dūṣitāṁ kṛṣṇāṁ kṛṣṇaḥ kṛṣṇāhinā vibhuḥ

tasyā viśuddhim anvicchan sarpaṁ tam udavāsayat

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, seeing that the Yamunā River had been contaminated by the black snake Kāliya, desired to purify the river, and thus the Lord banished him from it.

COMMENTARY

This chapter describes Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastime of subduing the serpent Kāliya, showing pleasure with the prayers of the *Nāga-patnīs,* and banishing Kāliya from the river Yamunā.

In this verse *kṛṣṇām* refers to the Yamunā. Seeing how Kāliya was polluting the Yamunā with poison, Kṛṣṇa decided to banish that black snake.

|| 10.16.2 ||

śrī-rājovāca

katham antar-jale ʼgādhe nyagṛhṇād bhagavān ahim

sa vai bahu-yugāvāsaṁ yathāsīd vipra kathyatām

TRANSLATION

King Parīkṣit inquired: O learned sage, please explain how the Supreme Personality of Godhead chastised the serpent Kāliya within the unfathomable waters of the Yamunā, and how it was that Kāliya had been living there for so many ages.

COMMENTARY

O learned sage! Please tell how Kāliya was able to live there for so many *yugas* (*bahu-yugāvāsam*).

|| 10.16.3 ||

brahman bhagavatas tasya bhūmnaḥ svacchanda-vartinaḥ

gopālodāra-caritaṁ kas tṛpyetāmṛtaṁ juṣan

TRANSLATION

O brāhmaṇa, the unlimited Supreme Personality of Godhead freely acts according to His own desires. Who could be satiated when hearing the nectar of the magnanimous pastimes He performed as a cowherd boy in Vṛndāvana?

COMMENTARY

Gopāla udāra caritam means the magnanimous (*udāra*) pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, the cowherd boy. However the word "*go*" can also refer to the senses of the devotees. The word *gopāla* then means one who nourishes the senses of the devotees. The word *udāra* also means giving happiness. Thus the phrase *gopāla udāra caritam* can mean the pastimes of Gopāla Kṛṣṇa bring joy and nourish the senses of the devotees. King Parīkṣit said, "Who could ever be satiated when tasting Kṛṣṇa pastimes, which satisfy the senses of the hearer and bring joy to the heart?"

|| 10.16.4 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

kālindyāṁ kāliyasyāsīd hradaḥ kaścid viṣāgninā

śrapyamāṇa-payā yasmin patanty upari-gāḥ khagāḥ

TRANSLATION

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Within the river Kālindī [Yamunā] was a lake inhabited by the serpent Kāliya, whose fiery poison constantly heated and boiled its waters. Indeed, the vapors thus created were so poisonous that birds flying over the contaminated lake would fall down into it.

COMMENTARY

According to *Śrī Hari-vaṁśa*, the Kāliya lake was about one yojana wide [eight miles], and situated in the southern part of the Yamunā, apart from the main current of the river. Otherwise the poisonous waters of the lake, which were boiling hot (*śrapyamāṇa*), would have troubled the residents of Mathurā and other places farther away.

|| 10.16.5 ||

vipruṣmatā viṣadormi-mārutenābhimarśitāḥ

mriyante tīra-gā yasya prāṇinaḥ sthira-jaṅgamāḥ

TRANSLATION

The wind blowing over that deadly lake carried droplets of water to the shore. Simply by coming in contact with that poisonous breeze, all vegetation and creatures on the shore died.

COMMENTARY

Moving and non-moving creatures such as trees died just by contacting (*abhimarśitā*) the poisonous breeze, which carried droplets of water (*vipruṣmatā*) from that deadly lake.

|| 10.16.6 ||

taṁ caṇḍa-vega-viṣa-vīryam avekṣya tena

duṣṭāṁ nadīṁ ca khala-saṁyamanāvatāraḥ

kṛṣṇaḥ kadambam adhiruhya tato 'ti-tuṅgam

āsphoṭya gāḍha-raśano nyapatad viṣode

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa saw how the Kāliya serpent had polluted the Yamunā River with his terribly powerful poison. Since Kṛṣṇa had descended from the spiritual world specifically to subdue envious demons, the Lord immediately climbed to the top of a very high kadamba tree and prepared Himself for battle. He tightened His belt, slapped His arms and then jumped into the poisonous water.

COMMENTARY

The *Purāṇas* state that only the *kadamba* tree on the shore of the Yamunā remained unaffected by the poison of Kāliya because Garuḍa once sat in the tree drinking some nectar. The *kadamba* tree lived with the hope of being blessed by the touch of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet in the future.

|| 10.16.7 ||

sarpa-hradaḥ puruṣa-sāra-nipāta-vega-

saṅkṣobhitoraga-viṣocchvasitāmbu-rāśiḥ

paryak pluto viṣa-kaṣāya-bibhīṣaṇormir

dhāvan dhanuḥ-śatam ananta-balasya kiṁ tat

TRANSLATION

When the Supreme Personality of Godhead landed in the serpent's lake, the snakes there became extremely agitated and began breathing heavily, further polluting it with volumes of poison. The force of the Lord's entrance into the lake caused it to overflow on all sides, and poisonous, fearsome waves flooded the surrounding lands up to a distance of one hundred bow-lengths. This is not at all amazing, however, for the Supreme Lord possesses infinite strength.

COMMENTARY

The force of Kṛṣṇa jumping from the tree into the Yamunā created huge waves, which were four-hundred hands high and flooding all directions (*paryak*). Those fearful waves were colored reddish-yellow (*kaṣāya*) from the poison of the agitated snakes. The word *kaṣāya* also means a thick potion according Kṣira Swami, a commentator on the *Amara-kośa* dictionary.

|| 10.16.8 ||

tasya hrade viharato bhuja-daṇḍa-ghūrṇa-

vār-ghoṣam aṅga vara-vāraṇa-vikramasya

āśrutya tat sva-sadanābhibhavaṁ nirīkṣya

cakṣuḥ-śravāḥ samasarat tad amṛṣyamāṇaḥ

TRANSLATION

Kṛṣṇa began sporting in Kāliya's lake like a lordly elephant—swirling His mighty arms and making the water resound in various ways. When Kāliya heard these sounds, he understood that someone was trespassing in his lake. The serpent could not tolerate this and immediately came forward.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa played in the water by swimming, and producing wonderful musical sounds simply by splashing the water with His hands and arms. As Kṛṣṇa churned the water with His mighty arms, a thunder-ous roar arose. Upon hearing these sounds, Kāliya concluded that there must be some trespasser (*abhibhavam*) in his lake. The snake could not bear this (*tad amṛṣyamāṇaḥ*), so he immediately came forward (*samasarat*).

|| 10.16.9 ||

taṁ prekṣaṇīya-sukumāra-ghanāvadātaṁ

śrīvatsa-pīta-vasanaṁ smita-sundarāsyam

krīḍantam apratibhayaṁ kamalodarāṅghriṁ

sandaśya marmasu ruṣā bhujayā cachāda

TRANSLATION

Kāliya saw that Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who wore yellow silken garments, was very delicate, His attractive body shining like a glowing white cloud, His chest bearing the mark of Śrīvatsa, His face smiling beautifully and His feet resembling the whorl of a lotus flower. The Lord was playing fearlessly in the water. Despite His wonderful appearance, the envious Kāliya furiously bit Him on the chest and then completely enwrapped Him in his coils.

COMMENTARY

This verse shows that Kṛṣṇa looked very beautiful; His body glowing like a spotless white cloud. But He appeared just the opposite to the enraged Kāliya.

|| 10.16.10 ||

taṁ nāga-bhoga-parivītam adṛṣṭa-ceṣṭam

ālokya tat-priya-sakhāḥ paśupā bhṛśārtāḥ

kṛṣṇe ’rpitātma-suhṛd-artha-kalatra-kāmā

duḥkhānuśoka-bhaya-mūḍha-dhiyo nipetuḥ

TRANSLATION

When the members of the cowherd community, who had accepted Kṛṣṇa as their dearmost friend, saw Him enveloped in the snake’s coils, motionless, they were greatly disturbed. They had offered Kṛṣṇa everything—their very selves, their families, their wealth, wives and all pleasures. At the sight of the Lord in the clutches of the Kāliya snake, their intelligence became deranged by grief, lamentation and fear, and thus they fell to the ground.

COMMENTARY

Some cowherd men and farmers tending the grains in the fields nearby quickly ran there. They had offered everything for Kṛṣṇa’s pleasure, including their wives and friends.

|| 10.16.11 ||

gāvo vṛṣā vatsataryaḥ krandamānāḥ su-duḥkhitāḥ

kṛṣṇe nyastekṣaṇā bhītā rudantya iva tasthire

TRANSLATION

The cows, bulls and female calves, in great distress, called out piteously to Kṛṣṇa. Fixing their eyes on Him, they stood still in fear, as if ready to cry but too shocked to shed tears.

COMMENTARY

Because the water in their eyes had dried up from fear, the cows, bulls and female calves could not really weep. Thus they are described “as if ready to cry.”

|| 10.16.12 ||

atha vraje mahotpātās tri-vidhā hy ati-dāruṇāḥ

utpetur bhuvi divy ātmany āsanna-bhaya-śaṁsinaḥ

TRANSLATION

In the Vṛndāvana area there then arose all three types of fearful omens—those on the earth, those in the sky and those in the bodies of living creatures—which announced imminent danger.

COMMENTARY

Three inauspicious signs appeared in Vraja: earthquakes on the earth, meteors falling in the sky, and shivering in the bodies of men along with twitching of the left eye. Though there can be nothing inauspicious for the Lord, in order to indicate the lamentation of the inhabitants of Vraja, the demigods in charge of earthquakes and other disturbances did this. Or being attracted to the sweet and intimate *mādhurya* mood of Vraja, the demigods, out of affection for Kṛṣṇa, wanted to cover His *aiśvarya* (majestic opulence), so they produced various omens indicating misfortune for Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.16.13-15 ||

tān ālakṣya bhayodvignā gopā nanda-purogamāḥ

vinā rāmeṇa gāḥ kṛṣṇaṁ jñātvā cārayituṁ gatam

tair durnimittair nidhanaṁ matvā prāptam atad-vidaḥ

tat-prāṇās tan-manaskās te duḥkha-śoka-bhayāturāḥ

ā-bāla-vṛddha-vanitāḥ sarve ’ṅga paśu-vṛttayaḥ

nirjagmur gokulād dīnāḥ kṛṣṇa-darśana-lālasāḥ

TRANSLATION

Seeing the inauspicious omens, Nanda Mahārāja and the other cowherd men were fearful, for they knew that Kṛṣṇa had gone to herd the cows that day without His elder brother, Balarāma. Because they had dedicated their minds to Kṛṣṇa, accepting Him as their very life, they were unaware of His great power and opulence. Thus they concluded that the inauspicious omens indicated He had met with death, and they were overwhelmed with grief, lamentation and fear. All the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana, including the children, women and elderly persons, thought of Kṛṣṇa just as a cow thinks of her helpless young calf, and thus these poor, suffering people rushed out of the village, intent upon finding Him.

COMMENTARY

Seeing the inauspicious omens, Nanda Mahārāja and other inhabitants rushed out of the village of Gokula. This is described in three verses.

Observing the omens, the Vrajavāsīs thought Kṛṣṇa had died (*nidhanaṁ matvā*). But how can God die? The word *nidhana* also means a great treasure. Indeed, Kṛṣṇa had obtained the great treasure of a joyful sport in the Yamunā. The Vrajavāsīs were behaving just as an affectionate cow does toward her calf. Overwhelmed with fear and unhappiness, they rushed out of Gokula in great anxiety.

|| 10.16.16 ||

tāṁs tathā kātarān vīkṣya bhagavān mādhavo balaḥ

prahasya kiñcin novāca prabhāva-jño 'nujasya saḥ

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord Balarāma, the master of all transcendental knowledge, smiled and said nothing when He saw the residents of Vṛndāvana in such distress, since He understood the extraordinary power of His younger brother.

COMMENTARY

According to *Hari-vaṁśa* the word *mādhava* means master (*dhava*) of intelligence (*ma*). Balarāma is described here as the master of intelligence because He knew the power (*prabhava jña*) of Kṛṣṇa's *līlā-śakti*. Though Balarāma had the greatest affection for His younger brother, He understood that Kṛṣṇa desired to cover His opulence (*aiśvarya*) with His *līlā-śakti*. Therefore, Balarāma prevented Nanda and others from drowning themselves in the Yamunā out of grief.

Balarāma was laughing (*prahasya*) because He thought, “Kṛṣṇa never cares to play with Me in My form of Śeṣa Nāga, but now He is playing with this common, mundane snake named Kāliya.”

Remembering Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes as an ordinary mortal, Balarāma smiled and said nothing though the situation was beyond tolerance. However, when Balarāma smiled the Vrajavāsīs forgot their fear and lamentation and felt that nothing unfortunate would happen. Filling with the joy of Balarāma’s smile, they no longer desired to give up their lives.

|| 10.16.17 ||

te ’nveṣamāṇā dayitaṁ kṛṣṇaṁ sūcitayā padaiḥ

bhagaval-lakṣaṇair jagmuḥ padavyā yamunā-taṭam

TRANSLATION

The residents hurried toward the banks of the Yamunā in search of their dearmost Kṛṣṇa, following the path marked by His footprints, which bore the unique signs of the Personality of Godhead.

COMMENTARY

The Vrajavāsīs followed the path marked by Kṛṣṇa’s footprints, which bore the unique symbols of the Lord’s conch, disc and goad.

|| 10.16.18 ||

te tatra tatrābja-yavāṅkuśāśani-dhvajopapannāni padāni viś-pateḥ

mārge gavām anya-padāntarāntare nirīkṣamāṇā yayur aṅga satvarāḥ

TRANSLATION

The footprints of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the master of the entire cowherd community, were marked with the lotus flower, barleycorn, elephant goad, thunderbolt and flag. My dear King Parīkṣit, seeing His footprints on the path among the cows’ hoofprints, the residents of Vṛndāvana rushed along in great haste.

COMMENTARY

This verse describes how the Vrajavāsīs recognized Kṛṣṇa's footprints. *Viś-pateḥ* means of the master of the *vaiśyas*, cowherd community, and refers to Kṛṣṇa. Ignoring the cow's hoof prints, they exclusively followed the footprints of Kṛṣṇa.

This verse hints of the discerning *yogi*, who follows the path of the *Vedas* in pursuance of the highest truth while rejecting all illusory appearances of truth.

|| 10.16.19 ||

antar hrade bhujaga-bhoga-parītam ārāt

kṛṣṇaṁ nirīham upalabhya jalāśayānte

gopāṁś ca mūḍha-dhiṣaṇān paritaḥ paśūṁś ca

saṅkrandataḥ parama-kaśmalam āpur ārtāḥ

TRANSLATION

As they hurried along the path to the bank of the Yamunā River, they saw from a distance that Kṛṣṇa was in the lake, motionless within the coils of the black serpent. They further saw that the cowherd boys had fallen unconscious and that the animals were standing on all sides, crying out for Kṛṣṇa. Seeing all this, the residents of Vṛndāvana were overwhelmed with anguish and confusion.

COMMENTARY

This verse depicts the grief of the *gopas* and *gopīs*. Seeing Kṛṣṇa trapped within the clutches of the serpent, the Vrajavāsīs inquired from the boys, "Tell us what happened. Did Kāliya forcibly drag young Kṛṣṇa from the shore into the water, or did Kṛṣṇa jump from the bank? Was this His idea or someone else's?" Noticing that the boys were actually unconscious and thus incapable of answering, Nanda and the other Vrajavāsīs entered a state of shock and panic.

|| 10.16.20 ||

gopyo 'nurakta-manaso bhagavaty anante

tat-sauhṛda-smita-viloka-giraḥ smarantyaḥ

graste 'hinā priyatame bhṛśa-duḥkha-taptāḥ

śūnyaṁ priya-vyatihṛtaṁ dadṛśus tri-lokam

TRANSLATION

When the young gopīs, whose minds were constantly attached to Kṛṣṇa, the unlimited Supreme Lord, saw that He was now within the grips of the serpent, they remembered His loving friendship, His smiling glances and His talks with them. Burning with great sorrow, they saw the entire universe as void.

COMMENTARY

This verse describes the anguish of the young damsels of Vraja who were attached to Kṛṣṇa in *mādhurya-bhāva*. The word *bhagavati* here means most beautiful, and *anante* means filled with unlimited qualities. Seeing their most beautiful Kṛṣṇa, who is endowed with infinite attractive qualities, bound in the coils of the serpent, and remembering the love (*tat sauhṛda*) that Kṛṣṇa had for them, His gentle smiles, His furtive glances, and His loving prattles (*giraḥ*) during their amorous affairs (*smara-antyaḥ*), the gopīs saw the three worlds turn empty and meaningless. Due to the fire of separation from Kṛṣṇa, the entire universe burned to ashes.

|| 10.16.21 ||

tāḥ kṛṣṇa-mātaram apatyam anupraviṣṭāṁ

tulya-vyathāḥ samanugṛhya śucaḥ sravantyaḥ

tās tā vraja-priya-kathāḥ kathayantya āsan

kṛṣṇānane ’rpita-dṛśo mṛtaka-pratīkāḥ

TRANSLATION

Although the elder gopīs were feeling just as much distress as she and were pouring forth a flood of sorrowful tears, they had to forcibly hold back Kṛṣṇa’s mother, whose consciousness was totally absorbed in her son. Standing like corpses, with their eyes fixed upon His face, these gopīs each took turns recounting the pastimes of the darling of Vraja.

COMMENTARY

This verse describes the distress of those in *vātsalya-bhāva*, parental love. *Tāḥ* refers to the famous ladies of Vraja with children. In some editions of *Bhāgavatam* the word *prataptam* (torn apart) is used instead of *praviṣṭāṁ*. This would mean that Yaśodā was being torn apart upon seeing her son enwrapped in the serpent’s coils. Then Yaśodā entered the same state that her son appeared to be in and almost fainted.

When Yaśodā tried to jump in the Yamunā, the elder gopīs forcibly held her back with their arms. Then they affectionately wiped the sweat and tears from Yaśodā's face. To revive mother Yaśodā, the gopīs loudly recited stories about the darling of Vraja (*vraja-priya*). The elderly *gopīs* drowned everyone in the waves from the rivers of their lamentation (*śucaḥ sravantyaḥ*). The *Amara-kośa* dictionary says *sravanti* means river. Thus everyone became paralyzed like corpses (*mṛtaka pratīkāḥ*).

|| 10.16.22 ||

kṛṣṇa-prāṇān nirviśato nandādīn vīkṣya taṁ hradam

pratyaṣedhat sa bhagavān rāmaḥ kṛṣṇānubhāva-vit

TRANSLATION

Lord Balarāma then saw that Nanda Mahārāja and the other cowherd men, who had dedicated their very lives to Kṛṣṇa, were beginning to enter the serpent's lake. As the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Balarāma fully knew Lord Kṛṣṇa's actual power, and therefore He restrained them.

COMMENTARY

Balarāma physically held Nanda and others to keep them from jumping in the river, while saying, "Gargācārya said that you will be saved from all obstacles by this son. Keeping this in mind, don't you think Kṛṣṇa will get released from this danger? Just be patient. If you all jump in the river and drown, who will maintain and raise Kṛṣṇa when He comes back? Not only that, you will be neglecting Garga's order to take care of the boy as well." This was Balarāma's reasoning.

|| 10.16.23 ||

ittham sva-gokulam ananya-gatiṁ nirīkṣya

sa-strī-kumāram ati-duḥkhitam ātma-hetoḥ

ājñāya martya-padavīm anuvartamānaḥ

sthitvā muhūrtam udatiṣṭhad uraṅga-bandhāt

TRANSLATION

The Lord remained for some time within the coils of the serpent, imitating the behavior of an ordinary mortal. But when He understood that the women, children and other residents of His village of Gokula were in acute distress

because of their love for Him, their only shelter and goal in life, He immediately rose up from the bonds of the Kāliya serpent.

COMMENTARY

Seeing that the Vrajavāsīs had no other goal or shelter (*ananya-gatim*), and fully understanding (*ājñāya*) their sorrow, Kṛṣṇa spoke to Kāliya after remaining gripped in his coils for one *muhūrta* (forty-eight minutes).

Kṛṣṇa said, “Listen Kāliya, you have shown Me enough of your strength. Now, I will show you a little of My prowess, though I am just a cowherd boy.” Then Kṛṣṇa broke free from the snake (*uraṅga*) and stood up (*udatiṣṭhat*).

|| 10.16.24 ||

tat-prathyamāna-vapuṣā vyathitātma-bhogas

tyaktvonnamayya kupitaḥ sva-phaṇān bhujaṅgaḥ

tasthau śvasañ chvasana-randhra-viṣāmbarīṣa-

stabdhekṣaṇolmuka-mukho harim īkṣamāṇaḥ

TRANSLATION

His coils tormented by the expanding body of the Lord, Kāliya released Him. In great anger the serpent then raised his hoods high and stood still, breathing heavily. His nostrils appeared like vessels for cooking poison, and the staring eyes in his face like firebrands. Thus the serpent looked at the Lord.

COMMENTARY

This verse describes Kṛṣṇa’s freeing Himself from the snake and Kāliya’s weakening. Kāliya let go of Kṛṣṇa because he felt pained (*vyathita*) by the expanding body of the Lord (*prathyamāna vapuṣā*), which was previously much smaller. After releasing Kṛṣṇa, Kāliya raised his huge hoods, breathed heavily and stared at Kṛṣṇa. The snake’s nostrils were full of poison, and the glaring eyes in his face resembled firebrands.

|| 10.16.25 ||

taṁ jihvayā dvi-śikhayā parilelihānaṁ

dve sṛkvaṇī hy ati-karāla-viṣāgni-dṛṣṭim

krīḍann amuṁ parisasāra yathā khagendro

babhrāma so 'py avasaraṁ prasamīkṣamāṇaḥ

TRANSLATION

Again and again Kāliya licked his lips with his bifurcated tongues as He stared at Kṛṣṇa with a glance full of terrible, poisonous fire. But Kṛṣṇa playfully circled around him, just as Garuḍa would play with a snake. In response, Kāliya also moved about, looking for an opportunity to bite the Lord.

COMMENTARY

Kāliya repeatedly licked His lips (*dve sṛkvaṇī pari lelihānaṁ*). Kṛṣṇa moved around Kāliya with such agility that Kāliya, though continually searching this way and that for an opportunity, failed in his attempts to bite the Lord. To avoid Kāliya, Kṛṣṇa continually moved in the opposite direction as the serpent.

|| 10.16.26 ||

evaṁ paribhrama-hataujasam unnatāṁsam

ānamya tat-pṛthu-śiraḥsv adhirūḍha ādyaḥ

tan-mūrdha-ratna-nikara-sparśāti-tāmra-

pādāmbujo 'khila-kalādi-gurur nanarta

TRANSLATION

Having severely depleted the serpent's strength with His relentless circling, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the origin of everything, pushed down Kāliya's raised shoulders and mounted his broad serpentine heads. Thus Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the original master of all fine arts, began to dance, His lotus feet deeply reddened by the touch of the numerous jewels upon the serpent's heads.

COMMENTARY

Śrī Hari-vaṁśa confirms that with one hand Kṛṣṇa was able to push down Kāliya's raised head, which had gradually became tired from his relentless circling. Mounting the snake's broad heads, Kṛṣṇa began to dance. Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet became red like copper from touching the numerous jewels upon the heads of Kāliya.

As a dancer sometimes demonstrates his expertise by dancing on different objects such as dishes, Kṛṣṇa showed that He is original *guru* of all fine arts (*kalā ādi guruḥ*) by

skillfully dancing on the unsteady, moving surface of the serpent's hoods. In addition, Kṛṣṇa's remarkable display of dancing skill was meant to please the young damsels of Vraja, who at this stage of their relationship were seriously falling in love (*pūrva-rāga*) with Him.

|| 10.16.27 ||

taṁ nartum udyatam avekṣya tadā tadīya-

gandharva-siddha-muni-cāraṇa-deva-vadhvaḥ

prītyā mṛdaṅga-paṇavānaka-vādya-gīta-

puṣpopahāra-nutibhiḥ sahasopaseduḥ

TRANSLATION

Seeing the Lord dancing, His servants in the heavenly planets—the Gandharvas, Siddhas, sages, Cāraṇas and wives of the demigods—immediately arrived there. With great pleasure they began accompanying the Lord's dancing by playing drums such as mṛdaṅgas, paṇavas and ānakas. They also made offerings of songs, flowers and prayers.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa danced even without musical accompaniment by personally calling out syllables such as "*thai thai*" to imitate the sound of a musical instrument. The impression given is that Kṛṣṇa, upon seeing the *gopīs*, was considering, "We will meet together to dance like this sometime in the future." The word *nartum* is a substitute for the word *nartitum*, which means "to dance."

|| 10.16.28 ||

yad yac chiro na namate 'ṅga śataika-śīrṣṇas

tat tan mamarda khara-daṇḍa-dharo 'ṅghri-pātaiḥ

kṣīṇāyuṣo bhramata ulbaṇam āsyato 'sṛṅ

nasto vaman parama-kaśmalam āpa nāgaḥ

TRANSLATION

My dear King, Kāliya had 101 prominent heads, and when one of them would not bow down, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who inflicts punishment on cruel wrong-doers, would smash that stubborn head by striking it with His feet. Then, as Kāliya entered his death throes, he began wheeling his heads around and vomiting ghastly blood from his mouths and nostrils. The serpent thus experienced extreme pain and misery.

COMMENTARY

Sataika here means 101 chief heads, because the thirtieth verse mentions one thousand heads. When one head would not bow down, Kṛṣṇa would suddenly smash that stubborn head with His feet. Blood flowed profusely from Kāliya's mouths and nostrils.

|| 10.16.29 ||

tasyākṣibhir garalam udvamataḥ śiraḥsu
yad yat samunnamati niḥśvasato ruṣoccaiḥ

nṛtyan padānunamāyān damayāṁ babhūva

puṣpaiḥ prapūjita iveha pumān purāṇaḥ

TRANSLATION

Exuding poisonous waste from his eyes, Kāliya, would occasionally dare to raise up one of his heads, which would breathe heavily with anger. Then the Lord would dance on it and subdue it, forcing it to bow down with His foot. The demigods took each of these exhibitions as an opportunity to worship Him, the primeval Personality of Godhead, with showers of flowers.

COMMENTARY

When Kāliya would dare to raise one of his hoods, Kṛṣṇa would dance on it and force it down with the blows from His feet. At that time the Gandharvas and other celestials worshiped Kṛṣṇa with showers of flowers. Being pleased, Kṛṣṇa subdued the serpent for their benefit.

|| 10.16.30 ||

tac-citra-tāṇḍava-virugna-phaṇā-sahasro

raktaṁ mukhair uru vaman nṛpa bhagna-gātraḥ

smṛtvā carācara-guruṁ puruṣaṁ purāṇaṁ

nārāyaṇaṁ tam araṇaṁ manasā jagāma

TRANSLATION

My dear King Parīkṣit, Lord Kṛṣṇa's wonderful, powerful dancing trampled and broke all of Kāliya's one thousand hoods. Then the serpent, profusely vomiting blood from his mouths, finally recognized Śrī Kṛṣṇa to be the eternal Personality of Godhead, the supreme master of all moving and nonmoving beings, Śrī Nārāyaṇa. Thus within his mind Kāliya took shelter of the Lord.

COMMENTARY

Though the seed of devotion (*bhakti-bījam*) had previously been planted in Kāliya's heart by the mercy of his wives, who were actually exalted devotees of Kṛṣṇa, it could not sprout because of Kāliya's cruel behavior due to his previous *aparādhas*, just as seeds sown on barren ground cannot sprout.

By the purifying touch of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, however, Kāliya's offense was neutralized, and the seed of devotion began to sprout. Kāliya remembered (*smṛtvā*) or realized that he was now fighting an opponent who was thousands of times stronger than his arch-rival Garuḍa, and therefore this person must be the Supreme Lord.

Kāliya thought (*smṛtvā*), "This is the person my wives had previously described as being approachable by *bhakti*. Taking the position of my *guru*, He placed His feet on my head. Then by displaying His extraordinary power, he made me realize what a fool I am to think that I am god. Now I will take shelter (*araṇaṁ*) of Him (*tam*)."

|| 10.16.31 ||

kṛṣṇasya garbha-jagato 'ti-bharāvasannaṁ

pārṣṇi-prahāra-parirugna-phaṇātapatram

dṛṣṭvāhim ādyam upasedur amuṣya patnya

ārtāḥ ślathad-vasana-bhūṣaṇa-keśa-bandhāḥ

TRANSLATION

When Kāliya's wives saw how the serpent had become so fatigued from the excessive weight of Lord Kṛṣṇa, who carries the entire universe in His abdomen, and how Kāliya's umbrellalike hoods had been shattered by the striking of

Kṛṣṇa's heels, they felt great distress. With their clothing, ornaments and hair scattered in disarray, they then approached the eternal Personality of Godhead.

COMMENTARY

Seeing their husband so oppressed with the heavy weight of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who carries the universe in His belly, Kāliya's wives approached Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Previously the wives had been disgusted with their husband because of his demoniac activities and were thinking, "Let this atheist be killed by the Lord. Then as widows we will fully engage in Kṛṣṇa's service."

But when Kāliya's wives saw the symptoms of *sañcāri-bhāva* such as humility, remorse, regret, doubt and indifference to his suffering condition manifest in their husband's facial expressions and other bodily features, they thought, "Just see how fortunate we are! Our husband has now become a Vaiṣṇava. Therefore, we must try to save him." Feeling affection for their repentant husband, and being severely distressed (*ārtāḥ*) because of Kāliya's miserable condition, the wives joined together and approached Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.16.32 ||

tās taṁ su-vigna-manaso 'tha puraskṛtārbhāḥ

kāyaṁ nidhāya bhuvi bhūta-patiṁ praṇemuḥ

sādhvyaḥ kṛtāñjali-puṭāḥ śamalasya bhartur

mokṣepsavaḥ śaraṇa-daṁ śaraṇaṁ prapannāḥ

TRANSLATION

Their minds very much disturbed, those saintly ladies placed their children before them and then bowed down to the Lord of all creatures, laying their bodies flat upon the ground. They desired the liberation of their sinful husband and the shelter of the Supreme Lord, the giver of ultimate shelter, and thus they folded their hands in supplication and approached Him.

COMMENTARY

Kāliya's wives offered respects to Śrī Kṛṣṇa by paying obeisances on the ground. It is understood that in Kāliya's lake there was an island, where Kāliya held Kṛṣṇa in His coils. The inhabitants of Vraja could see this. The wives placed their children before them to invoke Kṛṣṇa's compassion.

|| 10.16.33 ||

nāga-patnya ūcuḥ

nyāyyo hi daṇḍaḥ kṛta-kilbiṣe 'smiṁs tavāvatāraḥ khala-nigrahāya

ripoḥ sutānām api tulya-dṛṣṭir dhatse damaṁ phalam evānuśaṁsan

TRANSLATION

The wives of the Kāliya serpent said: The punishment this offender has been subjected to is certainly just. After all, You have incarnated within this world to curb down envious and cruel persons. You are so impartial that You look equally upon Your enemies and Your own sons, for when You impose a punishment on a living being You know it to be for his ultimate benefit.

COMMENTARY

The wives of Kāliya [Nāga-patnīs] began praising Kṛṣṇa by first approving of His punishment in order to appease His anger.

The Nāga-patnīs prayed, "One must certainly bear the responsibility of his wicked deeds in the form of violence to the innocent and devoted. You protect the good and punish the wicked without any partiality. You look equally (*tulya-dṛṣṭiḥ*) upon Your enemies and Your own sons. Although Hiraṇyakaśipu was Your enemy, You protected His son Prahlāda. Yet You killed Narakāsura even though he was Your own son. You do not harbor any animosity while punishing the wicked because You know it will bring the ultimate benefit. After relieving them of their demoniac nature by hellish suffering, You reward them with the eternal happiness of liberation."

|| 10.16.34 ||

anugraho 'yaṁ bhavataḥ kṛto hi no daṇḍo 'satāṁ te khalu kalmaṣāpahaḥ

yad dandaśūkatvam amuṣya dehinaḥ krodho 'pi te 'nugraha eva sammataḥ

TRANSLATION

What You have done here is actually mercy for us, since the punishment You give to the wicked certainly drives away all their contamination. Indeed, because this conditioned soul, our husband, is so sinful that he has assumed the

body of a serpent, Your anger toward him is obviously to be understood as Your mercy.

COMMENTARY

The Nāga-patnīs continued, “Thus Your punishment is actually mercy for us, because the punishment You give to the wicked relieves them of all their sins. Due to grievous sins our husband attained the body of a snake and displayed anger and other bad qualities.”

|| 10.16.35 ||

tapaḥ sutaptaṁ kim anena pūrvaṁ nirasta-mānena ca māna-dena

dharmo ’tha vā sarva-janānukampayā yato bhavāṁs tuṣyati sarva-jīvaḥ

TRANSLATION

Did our husband carefully perform austerities in a previous life, with his mind free of pride and full of respect for others? Is that why You are pleased with him? Or did he in some previous existence carefully execute religious duties with compassion for all living beings, and is that why You, the life of all living beings, are now satisfied with Him?

COMMENTARY

The Nāga-patnīs prayed, “Previously we said that punishment was mercy, but this case is different. Though an object is very difficult to attain, one can easily attain it if he has previously done pious activities.” In this way they reason.

The Nāga-patnīs continued, “With his mind free from false pride and full of respect for others, Kāliya must have done austerities in a previous life. Such austerity is characteristic of a real Vaiṣṇava, for one does not see this type of austerity practiced by the nondevotees. As the Lord says, ‘I am not pleased with wealth or with austerities,’ ordinary austerities do not invoke the mercy of God. In some previous life Kāliya executed religious duties with compassion for all living entities, and thus he is Vaiṣṇava. Mercy towards all living entities is not seen in the heart of a fruitive worker.

“Because of Kāliya’s *tapas* (penance) and *dharma* (religious duties), he has received the affection of the Lord in the form of holding the Lord’s lotus feet on his head. If a person

respects all living entities and treats them with compassion, then the Supreme Lord, who is the shelter of all entities, becomes satisfied." That is the meaning of this verse.

What follows is the inferred meaning of the verse: The Nāga-patnīs said, "If You maintain the existence of all living entities and satisfy them with Your compassion, then why are You kicking our husband on the head?"

|| 10.16.36 ||

kasyānubhāvo 'sya na deva vidmahe tavāṅghri-reṇu-sparaśādhikāraḥ

yad-vāñchayā śrīr lalanācarat tapo vihāya kāmān su-ciraṁ dhṛta-vratā

TRANSLATION

O Lord, we do not know how the serpent Kāliya has attained this great opportunity of being touched by the dust of Your lotus feet. For this end, the goddess of fortune performed austerities for centuries, giving up all other desires and taking austere vows.

COMMENTARY

Actually the mercy given to Kāliya was not a result of his tapas or *dharma* (austerities or piety). It was just Kṛṣṇa's inconceivable causeless mercy. This is expressed in three verses.

The Nāga-patnīs prayed, "We cannot understand what type of pious activity the most sinful Kāliya performed to get this result (*anubhāva*). What result? It is very difficult to attain even a particle of dust at Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet by any type of pious activity such as austerity. It is even rarer to get the touch of Kṛṣṇa's feet, what to speak of having them dance on one's head. Even the goddess of fortune, who is Your intimate consort in Your form as Nārāyaṇa and a much greater devotee than Brahmā, could not fulfill her desire to touch Your feet in Your form as a cowherd boy even after performing severe austerities."

|| 10.16.37 ||

na nāka-pṛṣṭhaṁ na ca sārva-bhaumaṁ

na pārameṣṭhyaṁ na rasādhipatyam

na yoga-siddhīr apunar-bhavaṁ vā

vāñchanti yat-pāda-rajaḥ-prapannāḥ

TRANSLATION

Those who have attained the dust of Your lotus feet never hanker for the kingship of heaven, limitless sovereignty, the position of Brahmā or rulership over the earth. They are not interested even in the perfections of yoga or in liberation itself.

COMMENTARY

Hearing the Nāga-patnīs, Kṛṣṇa may have replied, “But what great result will a person get by attaining the dust of My feet?”

The Nāga-patnīs answer Kṛṣṇa’s question by saying, “No, You cannot say this. The result is greater than anything else. Those who surrender to You do not hanker for residence on Svargaloka. What then to speak of those who have attained the dust from Your feet?”

|| 10.16.38 ||

tad eṣa nāthāpa durāpam anyais tamo-janiḥ krodha-vaśo ‘py ahīśaḥ

saṁsāra-cakre bhramataḥ śarīriṇo yad-icchataḥ syād vibhavaḥ samakṣaḥ

TRANSLATION

O Lord, although this Kāliya, the king of the serpents, has taken birth in the mode of ignorance and is controlled by anger, he has achieved that which is difficult for others to achieve. Embodied souls, who are full of desires and are thus wandering in the cycle of birth and death, can have all benedictions manifested before their eyes simply by receiving the dust of Your lotus feet.

COMMENTARY

The Nāga-patnīs prayed, “The dust from Your feet gives the highest result. Simply by receiving that dust conditioned souls can attain all material enjoyments. Somehow Kāliya, the king of the snakes, who is full of ignorance and showed anger towards You, attained Your lotus feet, which even Laksmī and others find difficult to achieve.”

|| 10.16.39 ||

namas tubhyaṁ bhagavate puruṣāya mahātmane

bhūtāvāsāya bhūtāya parāya paramātmane

TRANSLATION

We offer our obeisances unto You, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Although present in the hearts of all living beings as the Supersoul, You are all-pervasive. Although the original shelter of all created material elements, You exist prior to their creation. And although the cause of everything, You are transcendental to all material cause and effect, being the Supreme Soul.

COMMENTARY

After glorifying the mercy of the Lord in six verses [33-38], the Nāga-patnīs bow down to Śrī Kṛṣṇa eleven times in the next ten verses [39-48] by devotedly saying *namaḥ* eleven times.

The Nāga-patnīs prayed, “We offer obeisances unto You, the supreme object of worship for the devotees. You are the Supreme Person with six transcendental qualities (*bhagavān*), yet You manifest a sweet humanlike form (*puruṣa*). Although You are all-pervasive (*mahā-ātmane*), in Your humanlike form You are the object of worship of the *yogīs* (*mahātma*). You dwell in all living entities (*bhūtāvāsāya*) as the Supersoul (*paramātma*). And although You are the original shelter of all material elements (*bhūta-āvāsāya*), You exist even prior to their creation (*bhūtāya*)”

|| 10.16.40 ||

jñāna-vijñāna-nīdhaye brahmaṇe ’nanta-śaktaye

aguṇāyāvikārāya namas te prākṛtāya ca

TRANSLATION

Obeisances unto You, the Absolute Truth, who are the reservoir of all transcendental consciousness and potency and the possessor of unlimited energies. Although completely free of material qualities and transformations, You are the prime mover of material nature.

COMMENTARY

In the mood of *jñānis*, the Nāga-patnīs prayed, "'We offer respects to the Absolute Truth, who is the reservoir of all knowledge and *cit-śakti*, spiritual potency (*jñāna-vijñāna*), just as the ocean (*nidhaye*) is the reservoir of all gems."

In the mood of devotion, the Nāga-patnīs continued, "We offer respects to You as the ocean of infinite inconceivable powers (*ananta śakti*). We offer respects to You whose transcendental qualities never transform into material qualities (*aguṇāya avikārāya*). We offer respects to You who have a variety of non-material, spiritual qualities (*aprākṛtāya*)."

The idea put forth by foolish persons that the Supreme Lord has material qualities is rejected by the devotees who adore Śrī Kṛṣṇa in His irresistibly attractive humanlike form.

|| 10.16.41 ||

kālāya kāla-nābhāya kālāvayava-sākṣiṇe

viśvāya tad-upadraṣṭre tat-kartre viśva-hetave

TRANSLATION

Obeisances unto You, who are time itself, the shelter of time and the witness of time in all its phases. You are the universe, and also its separate observer. You are its creator, and also the totality of all its causes.

COMMENTARY

Though the Lord appears in time and space, He is not affected by the qualities of material time and space.

The Nāga-patnīs prayed, "We pay respects to You who are time itself (*kālāya*), the shelter of time (*kāla nābhāya*), the witness of time in all its phases (*kāla avayava sākṣi*). You witness time but are unaffected by it. We pay respects to You. Although You are the universe (*viśva*), You remain untouched by it as the separate observer. You are its creator and the cause of all causes. What more can be said? We offer respects to You."

|| 10.16.42-43 ||

bhūta-mātrendriya-prāṇa-mano-buddhy-āśayātmane

tri-guṇenābhimānena gūḍha-svātmānubhūtaye

namo 'nantāya sūkṣmāya kūṭa-sthāya vipaścite

nānā-vādānurodhāya vācya-vācaka-śaktaye

TRANSLATION

Obeisances unto You, who are the ultimate soul of the physical elements, of the subtle basis of perception, of the senses, of the vital air of life, and of the mind, intelligence and consciousness. By Your arrangement the infinitesimal spirit souls falsely identify with the three modes of material nature, and their perception of their own true self thus becomes clouded. We offer our obeisances unto You, the unlimited Supreme Lord, the supremely subtle one, the omniscient Personality of Godhead, who are always fixed in unchanging transcendence, who sanction the opposing views of different philosophies, and who are the power upholding expressed ideas and the words that express them.

COMMENTARY

The Nāga-patnīs continued, "You are not just the cause, You are the very soul of the material elements. It is most astonishing that by Your arrangement the minute souls, though full of dynamic spiritual potential, appear lifeless like dull matter. You cover the perception (*anubhūtaye*) of the living entities (*svātma*) by the three modes of material nature (*tri-guṇena*)."

(Text 43) The Nāga-patnīs prayed, ''What is the conclusion in all of this? We cannot find the end to You (*ananta*), because You are difficult to understand (*sūkṣma*)."

Kṛṣṇa replies, "But intelligent men say that the living entity is different from Me and that I cover the living entities. Therefore how can you say I am non-different from them?"

The Nāga-patnīs answer, "You are *kūṭastha*. The dictionary says *kūṭastha* means He who pervades all three phases of time. Thus You remain in one form for all time, whereas the living entities (*jīvas*) take various forms for short periods of time. These forms are not their *svarūpa*, eternal spiritual form. Therefore You cannot be the same as the *jīva*.

"You know everything (*vipaścit*) but the *jīvas* know very little. We pay respects to He who, for His own purposes, sanctions all types of philosophies such as the *jīva* is nondifferent from God; the *jīva* is material; God is consciousness; God is one alone, and the *jīvas* are many. All of these opposing views take shelter of scripture. We pay respects to You, by whose desire arises the power of many meanings for many words (*vācya vācaka śakti*)."

|| 10.16.44 ||

namaḥ pramāṇa-mūlāya kavaye śāstra-yonaye

pravṛttāya nivṛttāya nigamāya namo namaḥ

TRANSLATION

We offer our obeisances again and again to You, who are the basis of all authoritative evidence, who are the author and ultimate source of the revealed scriptures, and who have manifested Yourself in those Vedic literatures encouraging sense gratification as well as in those encouraging renunciation of the material world.

COMMENTARY

The Nāga-patnīs prayed, "We pay respects to the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, the basis of all authoritative evidence and the topmost scriptural proof (*mūla pramāna*), and to Vedavyāsa its compiler (*kavaye*). You are personally present in the revealed scriptures. We pay respects to You who are the source (*yoni*) of the revealed the scriptures (*śāstra*). The same phrase (*śāstrayonitvat*) is seen in the *Vedānta-sūtra*. We offer obeisances unto the scriptures, which although propounding *dharma, artha, kāma* and *mokṣa*, can be grouped in two categories; *pravṛtti* (sense gratification) and *nivṛtti* (renunciation). We offer respects unto You who are the origin (*nigama*) of both."

|| 10.16.45 ||

namaḥ kṛṣṇāya rāmāya vasudeva-sutāya ca

pradyumnāyāniruddhāya sātvatāṁ pataye namaḥ

TRANSLATION

We offer our obeisances to Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Rāma, the sons of Vasudeva, and to Lord Pradyumna and Lord Aniruddha. We offer our respectful obeisances unto the master of all the saintly devotees of Viṣṇu.

COMMENTARY

In this verse the Nāga-patnīs glorify all the forms mentioned in the scriptures, especially Kṛṣṇa's eternal four-fold plenary expansions, the *catur-vyūha* (Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha). The words *kṛṣṇaya* and *rāmāya* indicate Vāsudeva and Saṅkarṣaṇa. The word *ca* indicates the son of Nanda.

The Nāga-patnīs prayed, “We offer respects to all these forms, including the son of Vasudeva (*vasudeva suta*) and Nanda’s son as well (*ca*). We offer respects to Kṛṣṇa, the protector of Vāsudeva and others in the Sātvata dynasty (*sātvatāṁ pati*).”

|| 10.16.46 ||

namo guṇa-pradīpāya guṇātma-cchādanāya ca

guṇa-vṛtty-upalakṣyāya guṇa-draṣṭre sva-saṁvide

TRANSLATION

Obeisances to You, O Lord, who manifest varieties of material and spiritual qualities. You disguise Yourself with the material qualities, and yet the functioning of those same material qualities ultimately reveals Your existence. You stand apart from the material qualities as a witness and can be fully known only by Your devotees.

COMMENTARY

Here the Nāga-patnīs are addressing Kṛṣṇa as ‘‘He who manifests (*pradīpāya*) various material and spiritual qualities (*guna-pradīpāya*).” Kṛṣṇa covers Himself with the screen of material nature; therefore He is called *guṇātma-cchādanāya*. But Kṛṣṇa can be recognized by His extraordinary quality of extreme *bhakta-vātsalya* (*guṇa-vṛtty-upalakṣyāya*) by which He makes the living entities Kṛṣṇa conscious. No one except *svayaṁ bhagavān* Śrī Kṛṣṇa has this quality. Seeing the good qualities (*guṇa-draṣṭre*) in His own (*sva*) devotees and not the faults, Kṛṣṇa allows Himself to be known (*saṁvide*) only by them, and also that ultimately only Kṛṣṇa can know Himself (*saṁvide*) perfectly.

|| 10.16.47 ||

avyākṛta-vihārāya sarva-vyākṛta-siddhaye

hṛṣīkeśa namas te ’stu munaye mauna-śīline

TRANSLATION

O Lord Hṛṣīkeśa, master of the senses, please let us offer our obeisances unto You, whose pastimes are inconceivably glorious. Your existence can be inferred from the necessity for a creator and revealer of all cosmic manifestations. But although Your devotees can understand You in this way, to the nondevotees You remain silent, absorbed in self-satisfaction.

COMMENTARY

The Nāga-patnīs prayed, “You are called *avyākṛta vihāra* because Your pastimes are unfathomable (*avyākṛta*), even by scripture, or because You have pastimes which appear material, or because Your pastimes are devoid of any special formalities or pomp (amorous affairs without marriage etc.). You endow Your devotee with a variety of abilities to serve You with perfection (*sarva vyākṛta siddhi*). You enchant all the senses (*hṛṣīkeśa*) of Your devotees. For those devoid of bhakti You are *ātmārāma*, self-satisfied (*muni*). For those who pray for the fulfillment of desires You are silent (*mauna śīla*); neither bestowing happiness nor relieving distress.”

|| 10.16.48 ||

parāvara-gati-jñāya sarvādhyakṣāya te namaḥ

aviśvāya ca viśvāya tad-draṣṭre ’sya ca hetave

TRANSLATION

Obeisances unto You, who know the destination of all things, superior and inferior, and who are the presiding regulator of all that be. You are distinct from the universal creation, and yet You are the basis upon which the illusion of material creation evolves, and also the witness of this illusion. Indeed, You are the root cause of the entire world.

COMMENTARY

The Nāga-patnīs prayed, “You know the goal to be attained by the devotee (*para*) and the non-devotee (*avara*). You are the superinten-dent of all results, and thus knowing what is proper, You bestow results to each according to what He deserves. Though You dispense the fruits of one’s *karma*, You are not bound by *karma* because You are distinct from matter (*aviśva*). When it is necessary You create this material universe by Your *māyā-śakti*, and remain as its overseer (*viśva draṣṭā*). Therefore You are the primal cause of the universe, animating it and directing its transformations.”

|| 10.16.49 ||

tvaṁ hy asya janma-sthiti-saṁyamān vibho

guṇair anīho ’kṛta-kāla-śakti-dhṛk

tat-tat-svabhāvān pratibodhayan sataḥ

samīkṣayāmogha-vihāra īhase

TRANSLATION

O almighty Lord, although You have no reason to become involved in material activity, still You act through Your eternal potency of time to arrange for the creation, maintenance and destruction of this universe. You do this by awakening the distinct functions of each of the modes of nature, which before the creation lie dormant. Simply by Your glance You perfectly execute all these activities of cosmic control in a sporting mood.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa asks, “What is the purpose in creating this universe, giving it life and transformation?

The Nāga-patnīs answer, “Simply by glancing upon the material nature after the end of the previous *kalpa*, You wake up the *jīvas* resting in the *pradhāna* to their previous nature, and then proceed with creation, maintenance and destruction through the three modes of nature (*guṇaiḥ*) *rajas, sattva* and *tamas*. Though You activate the modes of nature, You are not involved with any material endeavor (*anīhaḥ*). All this is brought about through Your eternal potency of time. Just by Your glance You execute all these activities in a playful mood.”

|| 10.16.50 ||

tasyaiva te ’mūs tanavas tri-lokyāṁ śāntā aśāntā uta mūḍha-yonayaḥ

śāntāḥ priyās te hy adhunāvituṁ satāṁ sthātuś ca te dharma-parīpsayehataḥ

TRANSLATION

Therefore all material bodies throughout the three worlds—those that are peaceful, in the mode of goodness; those that are agitated, in the mode of passion; and those that are foolish, in the mode of ignorance—all are Your creations. Still, those living entities whose bodies are in the mode of goodness are especially dear to You, and it is to maintain them and protect their religious principles that You are now present on the earth.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa inquires, “What is the intention of Your praises?”

The Nāga-patnīs reply, “You are the creator of all the material bodies throughout the universe. At the time of creation You awaken the bad qualities within the nondevotees, so how is it possible for Kāliya to give up his cruel nature on his own? Though all the bodies in the universe are created by You, we see that the living entities who take to devotion are dear to You. You are present on earth to maintain Your devotees, and help them uphold their religious principles.”

|| 10.16.51 ||

aparādhaḥ sakṛd bhartrā soḍhavyaḥ sva-prajā-kṛtaḥ

kṣantum arhasi śāntātman mūḍhasya tvām ajānataḥ

TRANSLATION

At least once, a master should tolerate an offense committed by his child or subject. O supreme peaceful Soul, You should therefore forgive our foolish husband, who did not understand who You are.

COMMENTARY

The Nāga-patnīs prayed, “You should tolerate the offense Kāliya has committed against Your devotees. After having been taught a lesson by You, however, if Kāliya again harasses Your devotees You are not obliged to forgive him. Our husband Kāliya is qualified for forgiveness because he is ignorant and foolish.”

Because of their extreme anxiety, the Nāga-patnīs ask Kṛṣṇa twice to forgive Kāliya. Kṛṣṇa is addressed as *śānta*, peaceful, because that is the cause of forgiveness.

|| 10.16.52 ||

anugṛhṇīṣva bhagavān prāṇāṁs tyajati pannagaḥ

strīṇāṁ naḥ sādhu-śocyānāṁ patiḥ prāṇaḥ pradīyatām

TRANSLATION

O Supreme Lord, please be merciful. It is proper for the saintly to feel compassion for women like us. This serpent is about to give up his life. Please give us back our husband, who is our life and soul.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa says, “I have diagnosed Kāliya’s disease, treated and cured him. But to wipe out the last traces of the disease, I must stomp on His head seven or eight times more. You should permit this.”

The Nāga-patnīs plead, “We fear that if You give our husband this strong medicine of punishment, which is actually some more mercy to purify him of all his offenses (*aparādha*), he may die; for he is just about to leave his body.”

Kṛṣṇa replies, “What does it matter if he gives up this snake body? What can he do with this body? It is better that he gets a spiritual body as My devotee.”

Nāga-patnīs: “If we beautiful women become widows we will be engaged by force to enjoy with another sinful snake. Since Kāliya is now a Vaiṣṇava, he has become the object of our affection and our life and soul.”

|| 10.16.53 ||

vidhehi te kiṅkarīṇām anuṣṭheyaṁ tavājñayā

yac-chraddhayānutiṣṭhan vai mucyate sarvato bhayāt

TRANSLATION

Now please tell us, Your maidservants, what we should do. Certainly anyone who faithfully executes Your order is automatically freed from all fear.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa says, “Then take your husband. I am giving him to you, but you must follow My order.”

The Nāga-patnīs answer, “Yes, we will follow. Please give us the order (*vidhehi*).” The order is revealed in a later verse.

|| 10.16.54 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

itthaṁ sa nāga-patnībhir bhagavān samabhiṣṭutaḥ

mūrcchitaṁ bhagna-śirasaṁ visasarjāṅghri-kuṭṭanaiḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus praised by the Nāga-patnīs, the Supreme Personality of Godhead released the serpent Kāliya, who had fallen unconscious, his heads battered by the striking of the Lord's lotus feet.

COMMENTARY

After punishing Kāliya with the blows of His feet, Kṛṣṇa immediately jumped down from his hoods and stood before the snake and his wives.

|| 10.16.55 ||

pratilabdhendriya-prāṇaḥ kāliyaḥ śanakair harim

kṛcchrāt samucchvasan dīnaḥ kṛṣṇaṁ prāha kṛtāñjaliḥ

TRANSLATION

Kāliya slowly regained his vital force and sensory functions. Then, breathing loudly and painfully, the poor serpent addressed Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, in humble submission.

COMMENTARY

Because his whole body was suffering from pain, Kāliya merely folded His hands (*kṛta-añjaliḥ*) with great difficulty, but he could not bow down on the ground before Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.16.56 ||

kāliya uvāca

vayaṁ khalāḥ sahotpattyā tamasā dīrgha-manyavaḥ

svabhāvo dustyajo nātha lokānāṁ yad asad-grahaḥ

TRANSLATION

The serpent Kāliya said: Our very birth as a snake has made us envious, ignorant and constantly angry. O my Lord, it is so difficult for people to give up their conditioned nature, by which they identify with that which is unreal.

COMMENTARY

Kāliya said, “When even learned men, though knowing it is wrong, become influenced by attraction and repulsion to sense objects, then what fault do I have?”

|| 10.16.57 ||

tvayā sṛṣṭam idaṁ viśvaṁ dhātar guṇa-visarjanam

nānā-svabhāva-vīryaujo-yoni-bījāśayākṛti

TRANSLATION

O supreme creator, it is You who generate this universe, composed of the variegated arrangement of the material modes, and in the process You manifest various kinds of personalities and species, varieties of sensory and physical strength, and varieties of mothers and fathers with variegated mentalities and forms.

COMMENTARY

Kāliya said, “You have made this universe with great diversity through the interplay of the modes of nature (*guṇair visarjanam*). You manifest a variety of personal natures and species, various kinds of sensory and physical powers, and varieties of mothers and fathers with variegated forms and desires.”

|| 10.16.58 ||

vayaṁ ca tatra bhagavān sarpā jāty-uru-manyavaḥ

kathaṁ tyajāmas tvan-māyāṁ dustyajāṁ mohitāḥ svayam

TRANSLATION

O Supreme Personality of Godhead, among all the species within Your material creation, we serpents are by nature always enraged. Being thus deluded by Your illusory energy, which is very difficult to give up, how can we possibly give it up on our own?

COMMENTARY

Kāliya said, "By nature I am very angry, therefore how can I possibly give up this insurmountable *māyā* on my own?"

|| 10.16.59 ||

bhavān hi kāraṇaṁ tatra sarva-jño jagad-īśvaraḥ

anugrahaṁ nigrahaṁ vā manyase tad vidhehi naḥ

TRANSLATION

O Lord, since You are the omniscient Lord of the universe, You are the actual cause of freedom from illusion. Please arrange for us whatever You consider proper, whether it be mercy or punishment.

COMMENTARY

Kāliya said, "You are the cause of freedom from *māyā* (*tatra*). Therefore, as You wish, You may be merciful to me or not."

|| 10.16.60 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

ity ākarṇya vacaḥ prāha bhagavān kārya-mānuṣaḥ

nātra stheyaṁ tvayā sarpa samudraṁ yāhi mā ciram

sva-jñāty-apatya-dārāḍhyo go-nṛbhir bhujyate nadī

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: After hearing Kāliya's words, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who was acting the role of a human being, replied: O serpent, you

may not remain here any longer. Go back to the ocean immediately, accompanied by your retinue of children, wives, other relatives and friends. Let this river be enjoyed by the cows and humans.

COMMENTARY

To punish the powerful serpent Kāliya, which Brahmā or Śiva would find difficulty in doing, Kṛṣṇa easily did just in a human form (*kārya-mānuṣa*). Kṛṣṇa did not employ His conch or disc (*śankha, cakra*) for this act. The word *kārya* can also mean pastime. Thus *kārya-mānuṣa* can mean "He who takes a form of a human for performing sweet pastimes." Or *kārya-mānuṣa* can mean "Brahman which takes the form of a human." Or *kārya-mānuṣa* can mean "the Lord who performs activities among humans."

Kṛṣṇa addressed Kāliya, "You must go back to the ocean along with Your children and wives, because the cows and cowherd men use this Yamunā river and its banks filled with grass, leaves and fruits."

|| 10.16.61 ||

ya etat saṁsmaren martyas tubhyaṁ mad-anuśāsanam

kīrtayann ubhayoḥ sandhyor na yuṣmad bhayam āpnuyāt

TRANSLATION

If a mortal being attentively remembers My command to you—to leave Vṛndāvana and go to the ocean—and narrates this account at sunrise and sunset, he will never be afraid of you.

COMMENTARY

Kāliya said, "May my fame of being punished by receiving Your feet on my head remain as long as the sun and moon endure."

Because Kṛṣṇa says here, "You will no longer have fear of snakes," this verse should be considered a *mantra* to ward off snake bites. There is another *mantra* which can also be recited like a spell to protect one from snakes mentioned in the *Ṛg Veda*:

yamunā-hrade hi so yāto, yo nārāyaṇa-vāhanaḥ,

yadi kālika-dantasya, yadi kākālikād bhayam,

janma-bhūmi-paritrāto, virviṣo yāti kālikaḥ

"Garuḍa, the bird carrier of Lord Nārāyaṇa, came to visit the lake in the Yamunā. One need no longer fear the bites of Kāliya nor his deadly poison. The Lord who protects Vrajabhūmi has made Kāliya harmless."

|| 10.16.62 ||

yo 'smin snātvā mad-ākrīḍe devādīṁs tarpayej jalaiḥ

upoṣya māṁ smarann arcet sarva-pāpaiḥ pramucyate

TRANSLATION

If one bathes in this place of My pastimes and offers the water of this lake to the demigods and other worshipable personalities, or if one observes a fast and duly worships and remembers Me, he is sure to become free from all sinful reactions.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, "For these reasons you should leave this lake: In order to free themselves from sins people come here to bathe, offer *tarpaṇa*, fast, meditate and worship Me. But if you stay here they cannot do this."

|| 10.16.63 ||

dvīpaṁ ramaṇakaṁ hitvā hradam etam upāśritaḥ

yad-bhayāt sa suparṇas tvāṁ nādyān mat-pāda-lāñchitam

TRANSLATION

Out of fear of Garuḍa, you left Ramaṇaka Island and came to take shelter of this lake. But because you are now marked with My footprints, Garuḍa will no longer try to eat you.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “You will have no more fear of Garuḍa.” This is the import of this verse.

|| 10.16.64 ||

śrī-ṛṣir uvāca

mukto bhagavatā rājan kṛṣṇenādbhuta-karmaṇā

taṁ pūjayām āsa mudā nāga-patnyaś ca sādaram

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: My dear King, having been released by Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, whose activities are wonderful, Kāliya joined his wives in worshiping Him with great joy and reverence.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa performed a most wonderful activity (*adbhuta karma*) by saving the Vrajavāsīs from Kāliya, protecting Kāliya from Garuḍa, and benefiting both the victims of violence and the perpetrator of violence. The word *kṛṣṇena*, “by Kṛṣṇa” refers to *karṣaṇam* which means to withdraw or remove. Kṛṣṇa removed Kāliya’s offense to Garuḍa and the Vrajavāsīs because the Nāga-patnīs worshiped Kṛṣṇa with love and devotion,

|| 10.16.65-67 ||

divyāmbara-sraṅ-maṇibhiḥ parārdhyair api bhūṣaṇaiḥ

divya-gandhānulepaiś ca mahatyotpala-mālayā

pūjayitvā jagan-nāthaṁ prasādya garuḍa-dhvajam

tataḥ prīto ’bhyanujñātaḥ parikramyābhivandya tam

sa-kalatra-suhṛt-putro dvīpam abdher jagāma ha

tadaiva sāmṛta-jalā yamunā nirviṣābhavat

anugrahād bhagavataḥ krīḍā-mānuṣa-rūpiṇaḥ

TRANSLATION

Kāliya worshiped the Lord of the universe by offering Him fine garments, along with necklaces, jewels and other valuable ornaments, wonderful scents and

ointments, and a large garland of lotus flowers. Having thus pleased the Lord, whose flag is marked with the emblem of Garuḍa, Kāliya felt satisfied. Receiving the Lord's permission to leave, Kāliya circumambulated Him and offered Him obeisances. Then, taking his wives, friends and children, he went to his island in the sea. The very moment Kāliya left, the Yamunā was immediately restored to her original condition, free from poison and full of nectarean water. This happened by the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who was manifesting a humanlike form to enjoy His pastimes.

COMMENTARY

In verse sixty-two Kṛṣṇa said that one can become sinless by worshiping and remembering the Lord. Therefore, Kāliya now begins to worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Kāliya said, "Although I am the most sinful, You gave me the most mercy. You have not put Your foot on others' heads and marked them with Your disc and conch. With great respect I, along with my wives, will offer You cooling sandalwood pulp from my hand because Your body was burned by the poison from my fangs."

Kṛṣṇa replied, "But applying these ointments will take time."

Kāliya said, "Then please sit my Lord." After making Kṛṣṇa sit down, Kāliya and His wives applied sandalwood to the Lord's body. Fulfilling their hearts' desire, Kāliya and his wives attained the mercy of the Lord and then left the Yamunā. This is described in two and half verses.

The Kaustubha gem (*maṇibhiḥ*) which adorned Kṛṣṇa's neck from His birth was lost in the coils of Kāliya in order to create excitement in His human pastimes of fighting and struggling with Kāliya. Without anyone's notice, Kṛṣṇa made His Kaustubha gem enter Kāliya's treasury. Then at the time of worshiping Kṛṣṇa with different jewels and ornaments, the Nāga-patnīs, unaware of Kṛṣṇa's transcendental trick, offered the Kaustubha gem to Him, thinking it was just one of their own jewels (*maṇibhiḥ*).

This is described in *Śrī Rādhā-kṛṣṇa-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā,* by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī as follows:

kaustubhākhyo maṇir yena praviśya hradam auragam

kāliya-preyasi-vṛnda-hastair ātmopahāritaḥ

> "The Lord had made His Kaustubha jewel enter the serpent's lake, and then He arranged for it to be presented to Himself by the hands of Kāliya's wives."

Being pleased with Kāliya, Kṛṣṇa, whose flag is marked with the emblem of Garuḍa (*Garuḍa dhvaja*), placed His lotus hand on Kāliya's head and removed all His pain.

Kāliya said, "O one who rides on Garuḍa! Now I am the servant of my older brother Garuḍa. If by chance Garuḍa is not present to carry You, then just remember me as Your personal carrier. I am the servant of Your servant, and in the wink of an eye I will instantly appear from millions of *yojanas* away." This is the implication of use of the words *Garuḍa-dhvajam*.

The *Purāṇas* state that in a different kalpa when Kaṁsa orders Kṛṣṇa to come to Mathurā for a wrestling match, the Lord sometimes goes there sitting on Kāliya.

The phrase *krīḍā-mānuṣa-rūpiṇaḥ* means that Kṛṣṇa eternally manifests a humanlike body for relishing playful pastimes. By Kṛṣṇa's touch the Yamunā became free of poison and filled with nectar.

Thus ends the commentary on the Sixteenth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Seventeen

The History of Kāliya

|| 10.17.1 ||

śrī-rājovāca

nāgālayaṁ ramaṇakaṁ kathaṁ tatyāja kāliyaḥ

kṛtaṁ kiṁ vā suparṇasya tenaikenāsamañjasam

TRANSLATION

[Having thus heard how Lord Kṛṣṇa chastised Kāliya,] King Parīkṣit inquired: Why did Kāliya leave Ramaṇaka Island, the abode of the serpents, and why did Garuḍa become so antagonistic toward him alone?

COMMENTARY

This chapter relates the reasons for Kāliya's fear of Garuḍa, Saubhari Muni's curse on Garuḍa, Kṛṣṇa's reunion with the Vrajavāsīs, and saving the boys from the forest fire.

|| 10.17.2-3 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

upahāryaiḥ sarpa-janair māsi māsīha yo baliḥ

vānaspatyo mahā-bāho nāgānāṁ prāṅ-nirūpitaḥ

svaṁ svaṁ bhāgaṁ prayacchanti nāgāḥ parvaṇi parvaṇi

gopīthāyātmanaḥ sarve suparṇāya mahātmane

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: To avoid being eaten by Garuḍa, the serpents had previously made an arrangement with him whereby they would each make a monthly offering of tribute at the base of a tree. Thus every month on schedule, O mighty-armed King Parīkṣit, each serpent would duly make his offering to that powerful carrier of Viṣṇu as a purchase of protection.

COMMENTARY

Once every fifteen days (*parvaṇi parvaṇi*) the snakes used to individually offer Garuḍa specially prepared fruits and roots under a tree so that he would not eat them and to insure their protection (*gopīthāya*).

|| 10.17.4 ||

viṣa-vīrya-madāviṣṭaḥ kādraveyas tu kāliyaḥ

kadarthī-kṛtya garuḍaṁ svayaṁ taṁ bubhuje balim

TRANSLATION

Although all the other serpents were dutifully making offerings to Garuḍa, one serpent—the arrogant Kāliya, son of Kadru—would eat all these offerings before Garuḍa could claim them. Thus Kāliya directly defied the carrier of Lord Viṣṇu.

COMMENTARY

Kāliya did not offer his share to Garuḍa, and moreover he ate all the other offerings meant for Garuḍa. Thus Kāliya directly disrespected (*kadarthī kṛtya*) the bearer of Viṣṇu. The other snakes on Ramaṇaka Island informed Garuḍa about Kāliya's arrogant behavior.

|| 10.17.5 ||

tac chrutvā kupito rājan bhagavān bhagavat-priyaḥ

vijighāṁsur mahā-vegaḥ kāliyaṁ samapādravat

TRANSLATION

O King, the greatly powerful Garuḍa, who is very dear to the Supreme Lord, became angry when he heard of this. Desiring to kill Kāliya, he rushed toward the serpent with tremendous speed.

|| 10.17.6 ||

tam āpatantaṁ tarasā viṣāyudhaḥ pratyabhyayād utthita-naika-mastakaḥ

dadbhiḥ suparṇaṁ vyadaśad dad-āyudhaḥ karāla-jihrocchvasitogra-locanaḥ

TRANSLATION

As Garuḍa swiftly fell upon him, Kāliya, who had the weapon of poison, raised his numerous heads to counterattack. Showing his ferocious tongues and expanding his horrible eyes, Kāliya then bit Garuḍa with the weapons of his fangs.

COMMENTARY

From a great distance Kāliya could spit venom at his enemy, and at short range he could bite with his terrible fangs. Kāliya had a ferocious tongue, loud hissing and terrible eyes.

|| 10.17.7 ||

taṁ tārkṣya-putraḥ sa nirasya manyumān pracaṇḍa-vego madhusūdanāsanaḥ

pakṣeṇa savyena hiraṇya-rociṣā jaghāna kadru-sutam ugra-vikramaḥ

TRANSLATION

The angry son of Tārkṣya moved with overwhelming speed in repelling Kāliya's attack. That terribly powerful carrier of Lord Madhusūdana struck the son of Kadru with his left wing, which shone like gold.

COMMENTARY

Garuḍa, the angry son of Kasyapa (*tārkṣya putra*) and the carrier of Madhusūdana, moved quickly to keep Kāliya from biting him.

|| 10.17.8 ||

suparṇa-pakṣābhihataḥ kāliyo 'tīva vihvalaḥ

hradaṁ viveśa kālindyās tad-agamyaṁ durāsadam

TRANSLATION

Beaten by Garuḍa's wing, Kāliya was extremely distraught, and thus he took shelter of a lake adjoining the river Yamunā. Garuḍa could not enter this lake. Indeed, he could not even approach it.

COMMENTARY

Kāliya fled to a lake adjoining the Yamunā which was difficult for others to enter (*durāsadam*) because of the depth.

|| 10.17.9 ||

tatraikadā jala-caraṁ garuḍo bhakṣyam īpsitam

nivāritaḥ saubhariṇā prasahya kṣudhito 'harat

TRANSLATION

In that very lake Garuḍa had once desired to eat a fish-fish being, after all, his normal food. Although forbidden by the sage Saubhari, who was meditating there within the water, Garuḍa took courage and, feeling hungry, seized the fish.

COMMENTARY

This verse explains why Garuḍa could not enter Kāliya's lake. Saubhari committed two offenses against the great devotee Garuḍa: first, he dared to give an order to his superior, and second, he obstructed Garuḍa's happiness. Disobeying Saubhari's order, Garuḍa committed violence by eating the fish. But this was not an offense because Garuḍa was superior to Saubhari Muni.

|| 10.17.10 ||

mīnān su-duḥkhitān dṛṣṭvā dīnān mīna-patau hate

kṛpayā saubhariḥ prāha tatratya-kṣemam ācaran

TRANSLATION

Seeing how the unfortunate fish in that lake had become most unhappy at the death of their leader, Saubhari uttered the following curse under the impression that he was mercifully acting for the benefit of the lake's residents.

COMMENTARY

This verse describes the third offense to Garuḍa. Though showing compassion toward the fish, Saubhari displayed anger towards Garuḍa. Saubhari's attempt to help the fish had the opposite effect because Kāliya moved there and thus spelled doom for all the lake's residents. This verse illustrates that when one's so-called compassion does not tally with the order of the Supreme, it merely creates chaos.

|| 10.17.11 ||

atra praviśya garuḍo yadi matsyān sa khādati

sadyaḥ prāṇair viyujyeta satyam etad bravīmy aham

TRANSLATION

If Garuḍa ever again enters this lake and eats the fish here, he will immediately lose his life. What I am saying is the truth.

COMMENTARY

The statement "If Garuḍa enters this lake and eats the fish, he will immediately die" means that if Garuḍa entered the lake but did not eat fish, he would not die immediately, but slowly, whereas if he ate the fish, he would die immediately. Being omniscient, Garuḍa understood that Saubhari had made this curse, and thus he avoided this lake.

Kāliya had heard this story from his relatives residing in that lake, therefore he took shelter there. Due to his bad association with a fish, Saubhari Muni developed attachment and affection, lost his power of discrimination, and cursed an exalted devotee of Lord Viṣṇu.

The Ninth Canto of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* describes that because of false pride Saubhari Muni committed a great offense, and thus lost his power of austerity and spiritual beauty, and then fell from the bliss of Brahman. Then Saubhari Muni acquired a

youthful body because of his accumulated penances, married many beautiful princesses, and thus fell into a hellish existence of material pleasure. However, because he had once become glorious by taking shelter of the Yamunā River in Vṛndāvana, he was ultimately delivered.

|| 10.17.12 ||

tat kāliyaḥ paraṁ veda nānyaḥ kaścana lelihaḥ

avātsīd garuḍād bhītaḥ kṛṣṇena ca vivāsitaḥ

TRANSLATION

Of all the serpents, only Kāliya came to know of this affair, and in fear of Garuḍa he took up residence in that Yamunā lake. Later Lord Kṛṣṇa drove him out.

|| 10.17.13-14 ||

kṛṣṇaṁ hradād viniṣkrāntaṁ divya-srag-gandha-vāsasam

mahā-maṇi-gaṇākīrṇaṁ jāmbūnada-pariṣkṛtam

upalabhyotthitāḥ sarve labdha-prāṇā ivāsavaḥ

pramoda-nibhṛtātmāno gopāḥ prītyābhirebhire

TRANSLATION

[Resuming his description of Kṛṣṇa's chastisement of Kāliya, Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Kṛṣṇa rose up out of the lake wearing divine garlands, fragrances and garments, covered with many fine jewels, and decorated with gold. When the cowherds saw Him they all stood up immediately, just like an unconscious person's senses coming back to life. Filled with great joy, they affectionately embraced Him.

COMMENTARY

[After completing this story Śukadeva returns to the main story.] This verse indicates that Kṛṣṇa came out of the lake in a special way. Kṛṣṇa was kicking His feet in the water, and unseen by others, placing His feet upon the heads of other serpents in the water that had been ordered to serve Kṛṣṇa by Kāliya. If this were not so, Kṛṣṇa's whole body would have again become wet. The description of Kṛṣṇa's wearing divine flower

garlands and fresh cloth would not be appropriate. The boys regained their sense perception just like a dying man regaining his vital force. Their minds were filled with bliss (*pramoda nibhṛta ātmānaḥ*). Gopa here refers to Kṛṣṇa's cowherd boy friends, not the cowherd men. Because of natural unsteadiness, the boys would have embraced Kṛṣṇa before the elders.

|| 10.17.15 ||

yaśodā rohiṇī nando gopyo gopāś ca kaurava

kṛṣṇaṁ sametya labdhehā āsan śuṣkā nagā api

TRANSLATION

Having regained their vital functions, Yaśodā, Rohiṇī, Nanda and all the other cowherd women and men went up to Kṛṣṇa. O descendant of Kuru, even the dried-up trees came back to life.

COMMENTARY

Disregarding any embarrassment or fear of her elders, mother Yaśodā exclaimed with great happiness in a choked voice, "My son has been saved!"

Rohiṇī and other close friends stood behind Yaśodā in a tight circle. Nanda Mahārāja stood behind Rohiṇī. Due to impatience over the delay in meeting his son, Nanda Mahārāja, overwhelmed in love, abandoned his normal gravity and hastily made his way through the throng of women. Other elder cowherd men and women stood behind this intimate group.

Having been saved from death, the elderly gopīs returned to life and hurried to Kṛṣṇa. However, the word *ca* indicates that the young damsels of Vraja such as Rādhikā, who were developing their loving attachment for Kṛṣṇa, glanced upon their darling from a distance.

|| 10.17.16 ||

rāmaś cācyutam āliṅgya jahāsāsyānubhāva-vit

premṇā tam aṅkam āropya punaḥ punar udaikṣata

gāvo vṛṣā vatsataryo lebhire paramāṁ mudam

TRANSLATION

Lord Balarāma embraced His infallible brother and laughed, knowing well the extent of Kṛṣṇa's potency. Out of great feelings of love, Balarāma lifted Kṛṣṇa up on His lap and repeatedly looked at Him. The cows, bulls and young female calves also achieved the highest pleasure.

COMMENTARY

Smiling, Balarāma said, "You have done just the right thing." Though Balarāma was well aware of Kṛṣṇa's strength, He looked at Him intently (*udaikṣata*) again and again (*punaḥ punaḥ*) in order to see if Kṛṣṇa had incurred any injuries from fighting Kāliya.

|| 10.17.17 ||

nandaṁ viprāḥ samāgatya guravaḥ sa-kalatrakāḥ

ūcus te kāliya-grasto diṣṭyā muktas tavātmajaḥ

TRANSLATION

All the respectable brāhmaṇas, together with their wives, came forward to greet Nanda Mahārāja. They said to him, "Your son was in the grips of Kāliya, but by the grace of Providence He is now free."

COMMENTARY

Guravaḥ refers to Purohitas [family priests] such as Bhāguri Muni, the chief *paṇḍita* in the court of Nanda Mahārāja.

|| 10.17.18 ||

dehi dānaṁ dvi-jātīnāṁ kṛṣṇa-nirmukti-hetave

nandaḥ prīta-manā rājan gāḥ suvarṇaṁ tadādiśat

TRANSLATION

The brāhmaṇas then advised Nanda Mahārāja, "To assure that your son Kṛṣṇa will always be free from danger, you should give charity to the brāhmaṇas." With a satisfied mind, O King, Nanda Mahārāja then very gladly gave them gifts of cows and gold.

|| 10.17.19 ||

yaśodāpi mahā-bhāgā naṣṭa-labdha-prajā satī

pariṣvajyāṅkam āropya mumocāśru-kalāṁ muhuḥ

TRANSLATION

The greatly fortunate mother Yaśodā, having lost her son and then regained Him, placed Him on her lap. That chaste lady cried constant torrents of tears as she repeatedly embraced Him.

COMMENTARY

After getting back her son who was almost lost (*naṣṭa labdha prajā*), mother Yaśodā sat Kṛṣṇa on her lap and tightly embraced Him. Yaśodā could not do this before because there were many people around.

|| 10.17.20 ||

tāṁ rātriṁ tatra rājendra kṣut-tṛḍbhyāṁ śrama-karṣitāḥ

ūṣur vrayaukaso gāvaḥ kālindyā upakūlataḥ

TRANSLATION

O best of kings [Parīkṣit], because the residents of Vṛndāvana were feeling very weak from hunger, thirst and fatigue, they and the cows spent the night where they were, lying down near the bank of the Kālindī.

COMMENTARY

The Vrajavāsīs looked at Kṛṣṇa with unblinking eyes and said, “Let us rest here tonight. By good fortune Kāliya has gone, but if he comes back to take revenge, then all of us can fight him with clubs.” The Vrajavāsīs situated themselves at another place on the bank (*upakūlataḥ*) of the Yamunā due to fear of the poisonous water in Kāliya’s lake. They found a place where there would be no possibility of being surrounded by fire, and where they could fulfill their desire to keep Kṛṣṇa constantly in their sight.

|| 10.17.21 ||

tadā śuci-vanodbhūto dāvāgniḥ sarvato vrajam

suptaṁ niśītha āvṛtya pradagdhum upacakrame

TRANSLATION

During the night, while all the people of Vṛndāvana were asleep, a great fire blazed up within the dry summer forest. The fire surrounded the inhabitants of Vraja on all sides and began to scorch them.

COMMENTARY

Śuci means summer. A fire blazed up in the forest dried by the summer heat, and surrounded the sleeping cows and the Vrajavāsīs. Perhaps a loyal friend of Kāliya had assumed the form of a fire to avenge his friend, or maybe the fire was manifest by a demon follower of Kaṁsa.

|| 10.17.22 ||

tata utthāya sambhrāntā dahyamānā vrajaukasaḥ

kṛṣṇaṁ yayus te śaraṇaṁ māyā-manujam īśvaram

TRANSLATION

Then the residents of Vṛndāvana woke up, extremely disturbed by the great fire threatening to burn them. Thus they took shelter of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, who by His spiritual potency appeared like an ordinary human being.

COMMENTARY

Vrajaukasa refers to those who lived in Vraja engaged in agricultural work. Kṛṣṇa is described as *manujam*, appearing as a human being, in His original form. The Vedic *mantras* state, *svarūpa-bhūtayā nitya-saktyā māyākhyayā*: “The Lord’s eternal potency named *māyā* is innate in His original form.” Thus within the eternal spiritual body of Śrī Kṛṣṇa there is infinite potency, which effortlessly manipulates all existence according to the omniscient desire of the Lord.

The Vrajavāsīs took shelter of Kṛṣṇa, thinking, “Lord Nārāyaṇa will surely empower this darling boy to protect us.” They remembered what Gargācārya had said about Kṛṣṇa during His birth ceremony, “By His power you will easily be able to cross over all obstacles.” (SB 10.8.16) Therefore the Vrajavāsīs took complete shelter in Kṛṣṇa with full faith that He would save them from the forest fire.

|| 10.17.23 ||

kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa mahā-bhaga he rāmāmita-vikrama

eṣa ghoratamo vahnis tāvakān grāsate hi naḥ

TRANSLATION

[Vṛndāvana’s residents said:] Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, O Lord of all opulence! O Rāma, possessor of unlimited power! This most terrible fire is about to devour us, Your devotees!

COMMENTARY

The Vrajavāsīs called out to Balarāma as well, because He had also shown that He was omniscient. By saying *amita-vikrama*, they infer that Balarāma, like Kṛṣṇa, was invested with the supernatural power of some demigod.

|| 10.17.24 ||

su-dustarān naḥ svān pāhi kālāgneḥ suhṛdaḥ prabho

na śaknumas tvac-caraṇaṁ santyaktum akuto-bhayam

TRANSLATION

O Lord, we are Your true friends and devotees. Please protect us from this insurmountable fire of death. We can never give up Your lotus feet, which drive away all fear.

COMMENTARY

Kālāgneḥ here means the fire of death. The Vrajavāsīs prayed, “O Lord! If we die in this fire, we will be separated from Your lotus feet, and this is unbearable for us. Therefore, please save us just so we can keep serving You.”

|| 10.17.25 ||

itthaṁ sva-jana-vaiklavyaṁ nirīkṣya jagad-īśvaraḥ

tam agnim apibat tīvram ananto 'nanta-śakti-dhṛk

TRANSLATION

Seeing His devotees so disturbed, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the infinite Lord of the universe and possessor of infinite power, then swallowed the terrible forest fire.

COMMENTARY

In order to protect His family members (*sva jana*), Kṛṣṇa's *prema* for them began to search for a suitable power within Kṛṣṇa to finish the forest fire. How can this very young, tender boy swallow such an intense fire? Thus Kṛṣṇa's *saṁhārikā-śakti* (power of destruction) swallowed the fire. Therefore the description of Kṛṣṇa being the possessor of unlimited potencies (*śakti dhṛk*) and thus swallowing the fire is only a figure of speech, since His *saṁhārikā-śakti* actually did it.

Thus ends the commentary on the Seventeenth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Eighteen

Lord Balarāma Slays the Demon Pralamba

|| 10.18.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

atha kṛṣṇaḥ parivṛto jñātibhir muditātmabhiḥ

anugīyamāno nyaviśad vrajaṁ gokula-maṇḍitam

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Surrounded by His blissful companions, who constantly chanted His glories, Śrī Kṛṣṇa then entered the village of Vraja, which was decorated with herds of cows.

COMMENTARY

This chapter describes the summer season, Kṛṣṇa carrying His friend Dama on His shoulders, and Balarāma destroying the demon Pralamba after riding on his shoulders.

|| 10.18.2 ||

vraje vikrīḍator evaṁ gopāla-cchadma-māyayā

grīṣmo nāmartur abhavan nāti-preyāñ charīriṇām

TRANSLATION

While Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were thus enjoying life in Vṛndāvana in the guise of ordinary cowherd boys, the summer season gradually appeared. This season is not very pleasing to embodied souls.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa's herding cows was just a pretense for going to the forest and playing with His cowherd boy friends. By cheating materialistic men with this pretense, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma actually played with Their personal gopīs. In *Ānanda Vṛndāvana Campū*, Kavi-karṇapūra describes that Balarāma had separate gopīs from Kṛṣṇa. This will also be described later in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*.

|| 10.18.3 ||

sa ca vṛndāvana-guṇair vasanta iva lakṣitaḥ

yatrāste bhagavān sākṣād rāmeṇa saha keśavaḥ

TRANSLATION

Nevertheless, because the Supreme Personality of Godhead was personally staying in Vṛndāvana along with Balarāma, summer manifested the qualities of spring. Such are the features of the land of Vṛndāvana.

COMMENTARY

This and the next three verses describe how Vṛndāvana manifested the features of spring, even during the summer season. "During the summer in Vṛndāvana, the resounding of the waterfalls (*nirjhara nirhrāda*) covered the crickets' cacophony. The entire area was beautified by groups of trees constantly moistened by spray from the waterfalls."

|| 10.18.4 ||

yatra nirjhara-nirhrāda-nivṛtta-svana-jhillikam

śaśvat tac-chīkararjīṣa-druma-maṇḍala-maṇḍitam

TRANSLATION

In Vṛndāvana, the loud sound of waterfalls covered the crickets' noise, and clusters of trees constantly moistened by spray from those waterfalls beautified the entire area.

|| 10.18.5 ||

sarit-saraḥ-prasravaṇormi-vāyunā kahlāra-kañjotpala-reṇu-hāriṇā

na vidyate yatra vanaukasāṁ davo nidāgha-vahny-arka-bhavo 'ti-śādvale

TRANSLATION

The wind wafting over the waves of the lakes and flowing rivers carried away the pollen of many varieties of lotuses and water lilies and then cooled the entire Vṛndāvana area. Thus the residents there did not suffer from the heat generated by the blazing summer sun and seasonal forest fires. Indeed, Vṛndāvana was abundant with fresh green grass.

COMMENTARY

"Vṛndāvana was cool in the summer because of the breezes wafting over the waves of the rivers. The wind, like a thief, silently and invisibly stole the pollen from the lotuses, and then gave relief from the heat with its fragrant, gentle breezes. Though the scorching summer sun usually dries up everything, it did not do so in Vṛndāvana, and thus the place was full of tender green grass."

|| 10.18.6 ||

agādha-toya-hradinī-taṭormibhir dravat-purīṣyāḥ pulinaiḥ samantataḥ

na yatra caṇḍāṁśu-karā viṣolbaṇā bhuvo rasaṁ śādvalitaṁ ca gṛhṇate

TRANSLATION

With their flowing waves the deep rivers drenched their banks, making them damp and muddy. Thus the rays of the sun, which were as fierce as poison, could not evaporate the earth's sap or parch its green grass.

COMMENTARY

No one felt the heat of the summer sun because of the tall shade-giving trees. This verse mentions another reason. "The deep flowing rivers made their banks wet and muddy. Thus the sun could not parch the green grass."

|| 10.18.7 ||

vanaṁ kusumitaṁ śrīman nadac-citra-mṛga-dvijam

gāyan mayūra-bhramaraṁ kūjat-kokila-sārasam

TRANSLATION

Flowers beautifully decorated the forest of Vṛndāvana, and many varieties of animals and birds filled it with sound. The peacocks and bees sang, and the cuckoos and cranes cooed.

|| 10.18.8 ||

krīḍiṣyamāṇas tat kṛṣṇo bhagavān bala-saṁyutaḥ

veṇuṁ viraṇayan gopair go-dhanaiḥ saṁvṛto 'viśat

TRANSLATION

Intending to engage in pastimes, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, accompanied by Lord Balarāma and surrounded by the cowherd boys and the cows, entered the forest of Vṛndāvana as He played His flute.

|| 10.18.9 ||

pravāla-barha-stabaka-srag-dhātu-kṛta-bhūṣaṇāḥ

rāma-kṛṣṇādayo gopā naṛtur yuyudhur jaguḥ

TRANSLATION

Decorating themselves with newly grown leaves, along with peacock feathers, garlands, clusters of flower buds, and colored minerals, Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa and Their cowherd friends danced, wrestled and sang.

COMMENTARY

Here Balarāma is also addressed as a *gopa* to indicate that even He became absorbed in His identity as an ordinary cowherd boy.

|| 10.18.10 ||

kṛṣṇasya nṛtyataḥ kecij jaguḥ kecid avādayan

veṇu-pāṇitalaiḥ śṛṅgaiḥ praśaśaṁsur athāpare

TRANSLATION

As Kṛṣṇa danced, some of the boys accompanied Him by singing, and others by playing flutes, hand cymbals and buffalo horns, while still others praised His dancing.

COMMENTARY

In this verse the genitive absolute, *kṛṣṇasya nṛtyataḥ*, appears in place of the locative absolute, *kṛṣṇe nṛtyati*. "When Kṛṣṇa danced, some boys sang and some played flutes, *karatālas* and buffalo horns, while others gave praise."

|| 10.18.11 ||

gopa-jāti-praticchannā devā gopāla-rūpiṇau

īḍire kṛṣṇa-rāmau ca naṭā iva naṭaṁ nṛpa

TRANSLATION

O King, demigods disguised themselves as members of the cowherd community and, just as dramatic dancers praise another dancer, worshiped Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, who were also appearing as cowherd boys.

COMMENTARY

If the demigods had appeared in their natural forms, the cowherd boys would have recognized them and worshiped them. Therefore the demigods came as cowherd boys, like Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. In this way, Śiva, Nārada and other demigods disguised themselves as cowherd boys to taste the ecstasy of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. The phrase *gopāla-rūpiṇau* means that Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma eternally have the forms of cowherd boys.

|| 10.18.12 ||

bhramaṇair laṅghanaiḥ kṣepair āsphoṭana-vikarṣaṇaiḥ

cikrīḍatur niyuddhena kāka-pakṣa-dharau kvacit

TRANSLATION

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma played with their cowherd boyfriends by whirling about, leaping, hurling, slapping and fighting. Sometimes Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma would pull the hair on the boys' heads.

COMMENTARY

The boys played by arm wrestling (*niyuddhena*), and by making sounds with their palms in their arm pits (*āsphoṭana*). According to Śrīdhara Swami, *kāka pakṣa dharau* means the locks of hair remaining on the sides of the head after the *Cūḍā-karaṇa* ceremony. Others say it means hair tied in three braids, or the locks hanging in front of the ears. [*Cūḍā-karaṇa* is one of the ten *saṁskāras*, wherein a child's head is shaved to leave a sikhā]

|| 10.18.13 ||

kvacin nṛtyatsu cānyeṣu gāyakau vādakau svayam

śaśaṁsatur mahā-rāja sādhu sādhv iti vādinau

TRANSLATION

While the other boys were dancing, O King, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma would sometimes accompany them with song and instrumental music, and sometimes the two Lords would praise the boys, saying, "Very good! Very good!"

|| 10.18.14 ||

kvacid bilvaiḥ kvacit kumbhaiḥ kvacāmalaka-muṣṭibhiḥ

aspṛśya-netra-bandhādyaiḥ kvacin mṛga-khagehayā

TRANSLATION

Sometimes the cowherd boys would play with bilva or kumbha fruits, and sometimes with handfuls of āmalaka fruits. At other times they would play the games of trying to touch one another or of trying to identify somebody while one is blindfolded, and sometimes they would imitate animals and birds.

COMMENTARY

The boys would throw *bilva*, *kumbha* or *āmalaki* fruits into the air and then throw other fruits to try to hit them. *Netra-bandha* (bound eyes) indicates a game in which a blindfolded boy would have to identify a friend simply by feeling the boy's hands over his blindfolded eyes. In all their games the boys put up wagers for the winner, such as flutes or walking sticks. Sometimes they imitated the various fighting methods of the forest animals, and at other times they would chirp like birds.

|| 10.18.15 ||

kvacic ca dardura-plāvair vividhair upahāsakaiḥ

kadācit syandolikayā karhicin nṛpa-ceṣṭayā

TRANSLATION

They would sometimes jump around like frogs, sometimes play various jokes, sometimes ride in swings and sometimes imitate monarchs.

COMMENTARY

From Śravaṇa Śukla-tritiya, the third day of the waxing phase of the month of Śravana, the cowherd boys would play on swings (*syandolikayā*). The word *nṛpa-ceṣṭayā* (acting like a king) refers to the following pastime: To cross the Yamunā at certain places in Vṛndāvana people would have to pay a tax. Sometimes Kṛṣṇa and His friends would assemble in this area and prevent the Vraja-gopīs from crossing the river, insisting that they had to first pay a tax. Such pastimes were surcharged with joking and laughter.

|| 10.18.16 ||

evaṁ tau loka-siddhābhiḥ krīḍābhiś ceratur vane

nady-adri-droṇi-kuñjeṣu kānaneṣu saraḥsu ca

TRANSLATION

In this way Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma played all sorts of well-known games as They wandered among the rivers, hills, valleys, bushes, trees and lakes of Vṛndāvana.

COMMENTARY

Droṇi means the valleys between mountains.

|| 10.18.17 ||

paśūṁś cārayator gopais tad-vane rāma-kṛṣṇayoḥ

gopa-rūpī pralambo 'gād asuras taj-jihīrṣayā

TRANSLATION

While Rāma, Kṛṣṇa and Their cowherd friends were thus tending the cows in that Vṛndāvana forest, the demon Pralamba entered their midst. He had assumed the form of a cowherd boy with the intention of kidnapping Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma.

COMMENTARY

While Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were tending the cows, the demon Pralamba approached disguised as cowherd boy with a desire to kidnap Them. He assumed the form of a particular cowherd boy who on that day had remained home with duties to perform.

|| 10.18.18 ||

taṁ vidvān api dāśārho bhagavān sarva-darśanaḥ

anvamodata tat-sakhyaṁ vadhaṁ tasya vicintayan

TRANSLATION

Since the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, who had appeared in the Daśārha dynasty, sees everything, He understood who the demon was. Still, the Lord pretended to accept the demon as a friend, while at the same time seriously considering how to kill him.

COMMENTARY

Though outwardly Kṛṣṇa accepted Pralamba as a cowherd boy, inwardly He thought, "I will now kill him in this way."

|| 10.18.19 ||

tatropāhūya gopālān kṛṣṇaḥ prāha vihāra-vit

he gopā viharişyāmo dvandvī-bhūya yathā-yatham

TRANSLATION

Kṛṣṇa, who knows all sports and games, then called together the cowherd boys and spoke as follows: "Hey cowherd boys! Let's play now! We'll divide ourselves into two even teams."

|| 10.18.20 ||

tatra cakruḥ parivṛḍhau gopā rāma-janārdanau

kṛṣṇa-saṅghaṭṭinaḥ kecid āsan rāmasya cāpare

TRANSLATION

The cowherd boys chose Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma as the leaders of the two parties. Some of the boys were on Kṛṣṇa's side, and others joined Balarāma.

COMMENTARY

Parivṛḍhau means the two heroes. Some boys were on Kṛṣṇa's side and others joined Balarāma.

|| 10.18.21 ||

ācerur vividhāḥ krīḍā vāhya-vāhaka-lakṣaṇāḥ

yatrārohanti jetāro vahanti ca parājitāḥ

TRANSLATION

The boys played various games involving carriers and passengers. In these games the winners would climb up on the backs of the losers, who would have to carry them.

COMMENTARY

The details of their apparent play are described here. One boy would hide, and upon being found would become the loser and have to carry the victor on his shoulders.

|| 10.18.22 ||

vahanto vāhyamānāś ca cārayantaś ca go-dhanam

bhāṇḍīrakaṁ nāma vaṭaṁ jagmuḥ kṛṣṇa-purogamāḥ

TRANSLATION

Thus carrying and being carried by one another, and at the same time tending the cows, the boys followed Kṛṣṇa to a banyan tree known as Bhāṇḍīraka.

COMMENTARY

They came to a place with a *banyan* tree called Bhāṇḍiraka. Although it was convenient to use the branches of this tree to mount the shoulders of the defeated boys, the boys chose not to and climbed up on each others' shoulders near that place.

|| 10.18.23 ||

rāma-saṅghaṭṭino yarhi śrīdāma-vṛṣabhādayaḥ

krīḍāyāṁ jayinas tāṁs tān ūhuḥ kṛṣṇādayo nṛpa

TRANSLATION

My dear King Parīkṣit, when Śrīdāmā, Vṛṣabha and the other members of Lord Balarāma's party were victorious in these games, Kṛṣṇa and His followers had to carry them.

|| 10.18.24 ||

uvāha kṛṣṇo bhagavān śrīdāmānaṁ parājitaḥ

vṛṣabhaṁ bhadrasenas tu pralambo rohiṇī-sutam

TRANSLATION

Defeated, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa carried Śrīdāmā. Bhadrasena carried Vṛṣabha, and Pralamba carried Balarāma, the son of Rohiṇī.

|| 10.18.25 ||

aviṣahyaṁ manyamānaḥ kṛṣṇaṁ dānava-puṅgavaḥ

vahan drutataraṁ prāgād avarohaṇataḥ param

TRANSLATION

Considering Lord Kṛṣṇa invincible, that foremost demon [Pralamba] quickly carried Balarāma far beyond the spot where he was supposed to put his passenger down.

COMMENTARY

Thinking that Kṛṣṇa would be difficult to conquer, Pralamba went on Kṛṣṇa's side in order to carry Balarāma away. Pralamba carried Balarāma far beyond the spot where he was supposed to carry Him so that he would be out of Kṛṣṇa's sight.

|| 10.18.26 ||

tam udvahan dharaṇi-dharendra-gauravaṁ
mahāsuro vigata-rayo nijaṁ vapuḥ

sa āsthitaḥ puraṭa-paricchado babhau

taḍid-dyumān uḍupati-vāḍ ivāmbudaḥ

TRANSLATION

As the great demon carried Balarāma, the Lord became as heavy as massive Mount Sumeru, and Pralamba had to slow down. He then resumed his actual form—an effulgent body that was covered with golden ornaments and that resembled a cloud flashing with lightning and carrying the moon.

COMMENTARY

Only with great difficulty was Pralamba able to carry Balarāma, who became heavier than Mount Sumeru upon realizing He was being kidnapped. Pralamba was forced to slow down. Giving up his disguise as a cowherd boy, Pralamba showed a huge body dressed in gold ornaments and that resembled a cloud flashing with lightning and carrying the moon.

|| 10.18.27 ||

nirīkṣya tad-vapur alam ambare carat
pradīpta-dṛg bhru-kuṭi-taṭogra-daṁṣṭrakam

jvalac-chikhaṁ kaṭaka-kirīṭa-kuṇḍala-

tviṣādbhutaṁ haladhara īṣad atrasat

TRANSLATION

When Lord Balarāma, who carries the plow weapon, saw the gigantic body of the demon as he moved swiftly in the sky—with his blazing eyes, fiery hair, terrible teeth reaching toward his scowling brows, and an amazing effulgence generated by his armlets, crown and earrings—the Lord seemed to become a little frightened.

|| 10.18.28 ||

athāgata-smṛtir abhayo ripuṁ balo

vihāya sārtham iva harantam ātmanaḥ

ruṣāhanac chirasi dṛḍhena muṣṭinā

surādhipo girim iva vajra-raṁhasā

TRANSLATION

Remembering the actual situation, the fearless Balarāma understood that the demon was tṛying to kidnap Him and take Him away from His companions. The Lord then became furious and struck the demon's head with His hard fist, just as Indra, the king of the demigods, strikes a mountain with his thunderbolt weapon.

COMMENTARY

When Balarāma showed fear of the demon, Kṛṣṇa, who wanted to see some fun, injected knowledge of His godly powers into Balarāma. Thus Balarāma remembered (*athāgata-smṛtir*) His Lordship. In the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, Kṛṣṇa helps Balarāma recollect His powers by saying, "O soul of all, secret of all secrets, why are You acting like a human now?"

The words *vihāya sārtham* can be read as *vihāyasa artham*, meaning that the demon was kidnapping Balarāma by flying into the heavens (*vihāyas*) as if stealing some wealth (*artham*). Balarāma's powerful fist cracked the demon's head, just like lndra's thunderbolt smashes a mountain peak into pieces.

|| 10.18.29 ||

sa āhataḥ sapadi viśīrṇa-mastako mukhād vaman rudhiram apasmṛto ’suraḥ

mahā-ravaṁ vyasur apatat samīrayan girir yathā maghavata āyudhāhataḥ

TRANSLATION

Thus smashed by Balarāma’s fist, Pralamba’s head immediately cracked open. The demon vomited blood from his mouth and lost all consciousness, and then with a great noise he fell lifeless on the ground, like a mountain devastated by Indra.

|| 10.18.30 ||

dṛṣṭvā pralambaṁ nihataṁ balena bala-śālinā

gopāḥ su-vismitā āsan sādhu sādhv iti vādinaḥ

TRANSLATION

The cowherd boys were most astonished to see how the powerful Balarāma had killed the demon Pralamba, and they exclaimed, “Excellent! Excellent!”

|| 10.18.31 ||

āśiṣo ’bhigṛṇantas taṁ praśaśaṁsus tad-arhaṇam

pretyāgatam ivāliṅgya prema-vihvala-cetasaḥ

TRANSLATION

They offered Balarāma profuse benedictions and then glorified Him, who deserves all glorification. Their minds overwhelmed with ecstatic love, they embraced Him as if He had come back from the dead.

|| 10.18.32 ||

pāpe pralambe nihate devāḥ parama-nirvṛtāḥ

abhyavarṣan balaṁ mālyaiḥ śaśaṁsuḥ sādhu sādhv iti

TRANSLATION

The sinful Pralamba having been killed, the demigods felt extremely happy, and they showered flower garlands upon Lord Balarāma and praised the excellence of His deed.

Thus ends the commentary on the Eighteenth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Nineteen

Swallowing the Forest Fire

|| 10.19.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

krīḍāsakteṣu gopeṣu tad-gāvo dūra-cāriṇīḥ

svairaṁ carantyo viviśus tṛṇa-lobhena gahvaram

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: While the cowherd boys were completely absorbed in playing, their cows wandered far away. They hungered for more grass, and with no one to watch them they entered a dense forest.

COMMENTARY

This chapter describes how Kṛṣṇa saved the cowherd boys from a great fire in the Muñjāraṇya forest while their eyes were closed. Upon opening their eyes, they found themselves at the base of the Bhāṇḍīra *banyan* tree. While the boys were absorbed in playing, the cows wandered far away (*dūracāriṇī*) into a dense forest, driven by their greed for more grass.

|| 10.19.2 ||

ajā gāvo mahiṣyaś ca nirviśantyo vanād vanam

īṣīkāṭavīṁ nirviviśuḥ krandantyo dāva-tarṣitāḥ

TRANSLATION

Passing from one part of the great forest to another, the goats, cows and buffalo eventually entered an area overgrown with sharp canes. The heat of a nearby forest fire made them thirsty, and they cried out in distress.

COMMENTARY

The cows, buffalos and goats roamed from one forest to another until they came to grove of reeds (*īṣīkā*). The heat of a nearby forest fire made them thirsty.

|| 10.19.3 ||

te ’paśyantaḥ paśūn gopāḥ kṛṣṇa-rāmādayas tadā

jātānutāpā na vidur vicinvanto gavāṁ gatim

TRANSLATION

Not seeing the cows before them, Kṛṣṇa, Rāma and Their cowherd friends suddenly felt repentant for having neglected them. The boys searched all around, but could not discover where they had gone.

COMMENTARY

Not seeing the cows, the boys felt very repentant (*jātānutāpā*). Their love for the cows covered their knowledge, so they did not know where the animals had gone.

|| 10.19.4 ||

tṛṇais tat-khura-dac-chinnair goṣ-padair aṅkitair gavām

mārgam anvagaman sarve naṣṭājīvyā vicetasaḥ

TRANSLATION

Then the boys began tracing out the cows’ path by noting their hoofprints and the blades of grass the cows had broken with their hooves and teeth. All the cowherd boys were in great anxiety because they had lost their source of livelihood.

COMMENTARY

They followed the path of the cows by noting their hoofprints and the grass torn by their teeth. The boys were in great anxiety because they had lost their means of livelihood.

|| 10.19.5 ||

muñjāṭavyāṁ bhraṣṭa-mārgaṁ krandamānaṁ sva-godhanam

samprāpya tṛṣitāḥ śrāntās tatas te sannyavartayan

TRANSLATION

Within the Muñjā forest the cowherd boys finally found their valuable cows, who had lost their way and were crying. Then the boys, thirsty and tired, herded the cows onto the path back home.

COMMENTARY

Finding the crying cows and other lost animals in a thicket of reeds, they herded them onto the path home.

|| 10.19.6 ||

tā āhūtā bhagavatā megha-gambhīrayā girā

sva-nāmnāṁ ninadaṁ śrutvā pratineduḥ praharṣitāḥ

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Personality of Godhead called out to the animals in a voice that resounded like a rumbling cloud. Hearing the sound of their own names, the cows were overjoyed and called out to the Lord in reply.

COMMENTARY

This verse describes how Kṛṣṇa rescued the cows. When Kṛṣṇa looked at each cow and called out their individual names, they responded by mooing.

|| 10.19.7 ||

tataḥ samantād dava-dhūmaketur yadṛcchayābhūt kṣaya-kṛd vanaukasām

samīritaḥ sārathinolbaṇolmukair vilelihānaḥ sthira-jaṅgamān mahān

TRANSLATION

Suddenly a great forest fire appeared on all sides, threatening to destroy all the forest creatures. Like a chariot driver, the wind swept the fire onward, and terrible sparks shot in all directions. Indeed, the great fire extended its tongues of flame toward all moving and nonmoving creatures.

COMMENTARY

Just as Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma and the cowherd boys were about to take their cows back home, a terrible forest fire (*dava-dhūmaketu*) raged out of control and surrounded them. It is said that this fire was actually a friend of Pralamba. Like a chariot driver (*sārathini*), the wind whipped the fire into fierce flames.

|| 10.19.8 ||

tam āpatantaṁ parito davāgniṁ gopāś ca gāvaḥ prasamīkṣya bhītāḥ

ūcuś ca kṛṣṇaṁ sa-balaṁ prapannā yathā hariṁ mṛtyu-bhayārditā janāḥ

TRANSLATION

As the cows and cowherd boys stared at the forest fire attacking them on all sides, they became fearful. The boys then approached Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma for shelter, just as those who are disturbed by fear of death approach the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The boys addressed Them as follows.

COMMENTARY

Remembering that Garga Muni had said, “This boy will protect you from all dangers,” the cowherd boys asked Kṛṣṇa why this was happening. The phrase *gopāś ca gāva* (cowherds and cows) can also be read as *gopas sma gāva* (the cowherds and certainly the cows), and as *gopas sa gāva* (the cowherd boys with cows).

|| 10.19.9 ||

kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa mahā-vīra he rāmāmogha vikrama

dāvāgninā dahyamānān prapannāṁs trātum arhathaḥ

TRANSLATION

[The cowherd boys said:] O Kṛṣṇa ! Kṛṣṇa! Most powerful one ! O Rāma! You whose prowess never fails! Please save Your devotees, who are about to be burned by this forest fire and have come to take shelter of You!

|| 10.19.10 ||

nūnaṁ tvad-bāndhavāḥ kṛṣṇa na cārhanty avasāditum

vayaṁ hi sarva-dharma-jña tvan-nāthās tvat-parāyaṇāḥ

TRANSLATION

Kṛṣṇa! Certainly Your own friends shouldn't be destroyed. O knower of the nature of all things, we have accepted You as our Lord, and we are souls surrendered unto You!

COMMENTARY

The boys said, "Kṛṣṇa! You should not act so that Your friends experience suffering (*avasaditum*) like other people."

|| 10.19.11 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

vaco niśamya kṛpaṇaṁ bandhūnāṁ bhagavān hariḥ

nimīlayata mā bhaiṣṭa locanānīty abhāṣata

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Hearing these pitiful words from His friends, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa told them, "Just close your eyes and do not be afraid."

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa thought, “The boys should not see Me swallowing the fire. It should be done without anyone seeing. Since My friends are so hot and tired, I should place them under the cool shade of the beautiful Bhāṇḍīra tree.” After considering in this way Kṛṣṇa said, “Just close your eyes and don’t be afraid.”

The cowherd boys replied, “You must be joking! How can we escape from the forest fire just by closing our eyes?”

Kṛṣṇa said, “Do not fear. Today I will use another means to protect you.”

|| 10.19.12 ||

tatheti mīlitākṣeṣu bhagavān agnim ulbaṇam

pītvā mukhena tān kṛcchrād yogādhīśo vyamocayat

TRANSLATION

“All right,” the boys replied, and immediately closed their eyes. Then the Supreme Lord, the master of all mystic power, opened His mouth and swallowed the terrible fire, saving His friends from danger.

COMMENTARY

One boy said, “Listen friends! Kṛṣṇa knows everything about the powers of jewels and *mantras* to remove the effects of poison and fire. But these methods are not effective in the presence of others. Therefore, if we close our eyes then Kṛṣṇa will be alone. That is why He is telling us to close our eyes.” Hearing this, the boys agreed and then closed their eyes.

The word *bhagavān* here indicates that Kṛṣṇa was full of all great powers. Thus though the fire was fierce, He was confident He could swallow it.

There is a story that Kṛṣṇa was very thirsty at this time. Therefore, the forest fire, being both afraid and incapable of going against the will of Kṛṣṇa, turned into a very cool and tasty drink. The fire became a small drop on Kṛṣṇa’s tender hand, and then as *yogādhīśaḥ* (the supreme controller of all mystic power) He drank it.

Some say that *yogamāyā* appeared at this time and she herself took it from Kṛṣṇa's hand and swallowed it, but this interpretation gives sorrow to the truthful devotee. In the word *yogādhīśo, yoga* refers to *yogamāyā* and *ādīśa* means the master. Therefore Kṛṣṇa, the master of *yogamāyā*, swallowed the fire in His mouth.

Mukhena (with His mouth) can also mean method. By what method did Kṛṣṇa swallow the fire? Since Kṛṣṇa is *yogādhīsa*, He used the method of *yoga* and employed His *aiśvarya-śakti* to swallow the fire. The word (*kṛcchrāt*) indicates the boys were suffering from intense fatigue, hunger and thirst. Kṛṣṇa delivered them from these difficulties by immediately bringing them under the cooling shelter of the Bhāṇḍīra tree.

|| 10.19.13 ||

tataś ca te 'kṣīṇy unmīlya punar bhāṇḍīram āpitāḥ

niśamya vismitā āsann ātmānaṁ gāś ca mocitāḥ

TRANSLATION

The cowherd boys opened their eyes and were amazed to find not only that they and the cows had been saved from the terrible fire but that they had all been brought back to the Bhāṇḍīra tree.

COMMENTARY

Then Kṛṣṇa said, "O friends! You can open your eyes now. I have prevented the fire." The boys were astonished to see how they and the cows had been saved from the terrible fire.

|| 10.19.14 ||

kṛṣṇasya yoga-vīryaṁ tad yoga-māyānubhāvitam

dāvāgner ātmanaḥ kṣemaṁ vīkṣya te menire 'maram

TRANSLATION

When the cowherd boys saw that they had been saved from the forest fire by the Lord's mystic power, which is manifested by His internal potency, they began to think that Kṛṣṇa must be a demigod.

COMMENTARY

This verse shows that though the cowherd boys had seen Kṛṣṇa's amazing power, that awareness could not cover the sweetness of their *sakhya-prema* (ecstatic loving friendship), as was the case of Arjuna and others. *Yogavīrya* means the power to attain or achieve extraordinary things. The miracle of getting saved from the fire was caused by Kṛṣṇa's *yogamāyā-śakti*. After seeing Kṛṣṇa's supernatural power, the cowherd boys thought Kṛṣṇa might be a demigod (*amara*), since He had done something impossible for a human being. Nevertheless, the boys considered, "Because we are Kṛṣṇa's friends we are on the same level with Him, therefore, we must also be demigods." Thinking like this, Kṛṣṇa's cowherd friends became overwhelmed with bliss.

|| 10.19.15 ||

gāḥ sannivartya sāyāhne saha-rāmo janārdanaḥ

veṇuṁ viraṇayan goṣṭham agād gopair abhiṣṭutaḥ

TRANSLATION

It was now late in the afternoon, and Lord Kṛṣṇa, accompanied by Balarāma, turned the cows back toward home. Playing His flute in a special way, Kṛṣṇa returned to the cowherd village in the company of His cowherd friends, who chanted His glories.

COMMENTARY

Janārdana suggests two things. *Ardana* means pain and request. Kṛṣṇa caused pain (*ardana*) to the residents (*jana*) of the forest when He decided to return home. Being anxious to meet the residents (*jana*) of Vraja, Kṛṣṇa made the desire to request (*ardana*) Him to come home arise in their hearts. Janārdana, who pained the forest dwellers by leaving them, and who caused the Vrajavāsīs to request His return, entered the village playing a special tune on His celebrated flute.

|| 10.19.16 ||

gopīnāṁ paramānanda āsīd govinda-darśane

kṣaṇaṁ yuga-śatam iva yāsāṁ yena vinābhavat

TRANSLATION

The young gopīs took the greatest pleasure in seeing Govinda come home, since for them even a moment without His association seemed like a hundred ages.

COMMENTARY

Although everyone was blissful when Kṛṣṇa entered the village, mother Yaśodā's bliss was outstanding because of her intense parental affection. This was described in chapter fourteen, verse forty-seven. Now this verse describes the extreme bliss of the Vraja-gopīs (*gopīnāṁ paramānanda*) headed by Rādhā. In terms of both quality and quantity, the gopīs' love was supreme. *Parama* means there was nothing beyond it.

The uncommon quality of one particular gopī is being described here. This gopī experienced a moment (*kṣaṇaṁ*) of separation (*vinā*) from Kṛṣṇa as a hundred millenniums (*yuga-śatam iva*). To experience a moment as a hundred yugas is the quality of *adhirūḍha-mahābhāva*, the highest state of *prema*, attained after proceeding through *rati, prema, sneha, māna, praṇaya, rāga, anurāga* and *mahābhāva*. According to *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi* only gopīs such as Rādha possess this type of *mahābhāva*. The word *kṣaṇaṁ* is neuter instead of its regular masculine gender because this is the traditional usage.

Thus ends the commentary on the Nineteenth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Twenty

The Rainy Season and Autumn in Vṛndāvana

|| 10.20.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

tayos tad adbhutaṁ karma dāvāgner mokṣam ātmanaḥ

gopāḥ strībhyaḥ samācakhyuḥ pralamba-vadham eva ca

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said:To the ladies of Vṛndāvana, the cowherd boys then related in full detail Kṛṣṇa's and Balarāma's wonderful activities of delivering them from the forest fire and killing the demon Pralamba.

COMMENTARY

To enhance the portrayal of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, Śukadeva Gosvāmī describes the beauty of the monsoon and autumn seasons in Vraja in this chapter. In metaphorical terms, he depicts the wonderful qualities of the sky, rivers and forests.

|| 10.20.2 ||

gopa-vṛddhāś ca gopyaś ca tad upākarṇya vismitāḥ

menire deva-pravarau kṛṣṇa-rāmau vrajaṁ gatau

TRANSLATION

The elder cowherd men and ladies were amazed to hear this account, and they concluded that Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma must be exalted demigods who had appeared in Vṛndāvana.

COMMENTARY

After hearing about the extraordinary feats of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, the elderly Vrajavāsīs thought They were two eminent demigods. Due to their strong bond of love they never thought Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were God. These exploits simply nourished the sweetness of their relationship even more. It is not stated anywhere that their *vātsalya-bhāva* (parental love) ever decreased a bit. This would have happened, however, if they thought these two boys were God.

|| 10.20.3 ||

tataḥ prāvartata prāvṛṭ sarva-sattva-samudbhavā

vidyotamāna-paridhir visphūrjita-nabhas-talā

TRANSLATION

Then the rainy season began, giving life and sustenance to all living beings. The sky began to rumble with thunder, and lightning flashed on the horizon.

COMMENTARY

The onset of the rainy (*prāvṛṭ*) season brought new plants and sustenance to all living beings. Everything which had dried up became renewed with life. *Paridhiḥ* (circumference) refers to the disks of the sun and moon, which became especially bright (*vidyotamāna*). The sky began to rumble (*visphūrjitam*) with thunder.

|| 10.20.4 ||

sāndra-nīlāmbudair vyoma sa-vidyut-stanayitnubhiḥ

aspaṣṭa-jyotir ācchannaṁ brahmeva sa-guṇaṁ babhau

TRANSLATION

The sky was then covered by dense blue clouds accompanied by lightning and thunder. Thus the sky and its natural illumination were covered in the same way that the spirit soul is covered by the three modes of material nature.

COMMENTARY

The cloudy sky during the rainy season resembles the pure spirit soul covered by the modes of nature. Lightning is compared to *sattva-guna*, thunder to *raja-guna* and clouds to *tamo-guna*. Conditioned by the three modes of nature, the original brilliant nature of the pure spirit soul (*brahma*) is only dimly reflected through the haze of the material attributes (*guṇaṁ*).

|| 10.20.5 ||

aṣṭau māsān nipītaṁ yad bhūmyāś coda-mayaṁ vasu

sva-gobhir moktum ārebhe parjanyaḥ kāla āgate

TRANSLATION

With its rays, the sun had for eight months drunk up the earth's wealth in the form of water. Now that the proper time had arrived, the sun began releasing this accumulated wealth.

COMMENTARY

By its rays (*svagobhiḥ*) the sun (*parjanya*) draws water from the earth for eight months. When the proper time (*kāle*) arrives the sun returns the water. The sun's evaporating the earth's wealth of water resembles a king's collecting taxes. The sun is compared to a king because it takes and gives water just as the king takes taxes and returns benefits to the taxpaying citizens.

|| 10.20.6 ||

taḍidvanto mahā-meghāś caṇḍa -śvasana -vepitāḥ

prīṇanaṁ jīvanaṁ hy asya mumucuḥ karuṇā iva

TRANSLATION

Flashing with lightning, great clouds were shaken and swept about by fierce winds. Just like merciful persons, the clouds gave their lives for the pleasure of this world.

COMMENTARY

Agitated by the winds (*śvasana*), the clouds released their water (*Jīvanam*) on the parched earth [*jīvanam* also means water]. The clouds are compared to merciful persons (*karuṇā*). As clouds are agitated (*vepitāḥ*) by the wind, kind-hearted persons are moved by the misery of others. Seeing that suffering, compassionate persons such as Rantideva sacrifice (*mumucuḥ*) their lives (*jīvanam*), or the water (*jīvanam*) that keeps them alive and give it to others. This is how the cloud is compared with a compassionate person.

|| 10.20.7 ||

tapaḥ-kṛśā deva-mīḍhā āsīd varṣīyasī mahī

yathaiva kāmya-tapasas tanuḥ samprāpya tat-phalam

TRANSLATION

The earth had been emaciated by the summer heat, but she became fully nourished again when moistened by the god of rain. Thus the earth was like a person whose body has been emaciated by austerities undergone for a material purpose, but who again becomes fully nourished when he achieves the fruit of those austerities.

COMMENTARY

In this verse, the earth, being dried up by the sun, is compared to a *tapasvī*, a person doing austerities. A tapasvī is rewarded (*mīḍhā*) by the demigods (*devas*). The earth becomes sprinkled (*māḍhā*) with showers of rain just as the body of a *tapasvī* becomes nourished (*varṣīyasī*) by the demigods (*devas*). As the body of a person desiring material results becomes healthy on fulfilling his desires, so the earth becomes nourished by the rains. This example, however, is repugnant to the devotee striving for the ultimate goal, because austerities should be performed only for realizing the Supreme Lord.

|| 10.20.8 ||

niśā-mukheṣu khadyotās tamasā bhānti na grahāḥ

yathā pāpena pāṣaṇḍā na hi vedāḥ kalau yuge

TRANSLATION

In the evening twilight during the rainy season, the darkness allowed the glowworms but not the stars to shine forth, just as in the age of Kali the

predominance of sinful activities allows atheistic doctrines to overshadow the true knowledge of the Vedas.

COMMENTARY

In this verse *pāṣaṇda* means *pāṣaṇda śāstra* (atheistic doctrines). Fire flies shine forth in the evening twilight, but not the twinkling stars and planets. Similarly, in the age of Kali atheistic scriptures become prominent. This verse also uses a negative example.

|| 10.20.9 ||

śrutvā parjanya-ninadaṁ maṇḍukāḥ sasṛjur giraḥ

tūṣṇīṁ śayānāḥ prāg yadvad brāhmaṇā niyamātyaye

TRANSLATION

The frogs, who had all along been lying silent, suddenly began croaking when they heard the rumbling of the rain clouds, in the same way that brāhmaṇa students, who perform their morning duties in silence begin reciting their lessons when called by their teacher.

COMMENTARY

The frogs began croaking on hearing the thunder, just as *brāhmaṇa* students begin reciting their lessons when called by their teacher. This is a positive example.

|| 10.20.10 ||

āsann utpatha-gāminyaḥ kṣudra-nadyo ’nuśuṣyatīḥ

puṁso yathāsvatantrasya deha-draviṇa -sampadaḥ

TRANSLATION

With the advent of the rainy season, the insignificant streams, which had become dry, began to swell and then strayed from their proper courses, like the body, property and money of a man controlled by the urges of his senses.

COMMENTARY

As the rivers swell with water in the rainy season, they cause disturbance to others because they become difficult to cross. For one who acts independently (*sva tantrasya*) without following scriptural rules, his body, property and money become a cause of disturbance for others. This is a negative example.

|| 10.20.11 ||

haritā haribhiḥ śaṣpair indragopaiś ca lohitā

ucchilīndhra-kṛta-cchāyā nṛṇāṁ śrīr iva bhūr abhūt

TRANSLATION

The newly grown grass made the earth emerald green, the indragopa insects added a reddish hue, and white mushrooms added further color and circles of shade. Thus the earth appeared like a person who has suddenly become rich.

COMMENTARY

The earth appeared green from the fresh sprouts of green (*haribhi*) grass (*śaṣpaiḥ*). In some places it appeared reddish because of the small red insects. The white mushrooms were like umbrellas. Thus the earth appeared like a military parade displaying the wealth of a king shaded by parasols. This is a positive comparison.

|| 10.20.12 ||

kṣetrāṇi śaṣya-sampadbhiḥ karṣakāṇāṁ mudaṁ daduḥ

māninām anutāpaṁ vai daivādhīnam ajānatām

TRANSLATION

With their wealth of grains, the fields gave joy to the farmers. But those fields created remorse in the hearts of those who were too proud to engage in farming and who failed to understand how everything is under the control of the Supreme.

COMMENTARY

The proud man proclaims, “Farming is a lowly job which I cannot do.” But when the fields yield abundant crops he regrets, “If I had done some farming I would get wealth

during the rainy season." In this way the fields give joy to the farmer and pain to the lazy man, because such a person does not understand that his suffering is under the law of karma. Similarly, seeing the man on *nivṛttī-mārga* (path of renunciation) attain liberation, the man on the path of sense enjoyment (*pravṛttī-mārga*) laments. This example is not attractive to the devotee.

|| 10.20.13 ||

jala-sthalaukasaḥ sarve nava-vāri-niṣevayā

abibhran ruciraṁ rūpaṁ yathā hari-niṣevayā

TRANSLATION

As all creatures of the land and water took advantage of the newly fallen rainwater, their forms became attractive and pleasing, just as a devotee becomes beautiful by engaging in the service of the Supreme Lord.

COMMENTARY

Abibhran means to take on. Just as one becomes suddenly beautiful on performing devotional service to the Lord, since it is the supreme *dharma* and gives the highest results, similarly, the forms of animals and plants become attractive in the rainy season. This is a positive example.

|| 10.20.14 ||

saridbhiḥ saṅgataḥ sindhuś cukṣobha śvasanormimān

apakva-yoginaś cittaṁ kāmāktaṁ guṇa-yug yathā

TRANSLATION

Where the rivers joined the ocean it became agitated, its waves blown about by the wind, just as the mind of an immature yogī becomes agitated because he is still tainted by lust and attached to the objects of sense gratification.

COMMENTARY

The use of the masculine gender for *sindhu* instead of feminine is traditional usage. The ocean becomes agitated with waves by the merging of many smaller rivers. Similarly,

the desires (*kāmāktaṁ*) in heart of an immature *yogi* rise up like waves when he contacts material objects (*guṇa yuk*).

|| 10.20.15 ||

girayo varṣa-dhārābhir hanyamānā na vivyathuḥ

abhibhūyamānā vyasanair yathādhokṣaja-cetasaḥ

TRANSLATION

Just as devotees whose minds are absorbed in the Personality of Godhead remain peaceful even when attacked by all sorts of dangers, the mountains in the rainy season were not at all disturbed by the repeated striking of the rain-bearing clouds.

COMMENTARY

Though struck by torrents of water, the mountain does not shake but rather becomes beautiful, being washed of dirt. Similarly, a devotee afflicted by the pains caused by his body, mind or other entities is not disturbed because his mind is absorbed in the Supreme Lord (*adhokṣaja citta*). The *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* says that material pains cannot disturb the devotee absorbed in Kṛṣṇa's loving service.

mad-āśrayāḥ kathā mṛṣṭāḥ śṛṇvanti kathayanti ca

tapanti vividhās tāpā naitān mad-gata-cetasaḥ

"Taking shelter of Me, they engage in constantly hearing and chanting about Me. The various kinds of material miseries do not affect them because they are always filled with thoughts of My pastimes and activities."(SB 3.25.23) Thus a sincere devotee welcomes such difficulties. Because of his humility and surrendered attitude he remains free of pride, envy and other bad qualities.

|| 10.20.16 ||

mārgā babhūvuḥ sandigdhās tṛṇaiś channā hy asaṁskṛtāḥ

nābhyasyamānāḥ śrutayo dvijaiḥ kālena cāhatāḥ

TRANSLATION

During the rainy season the roads, not being cleansed, became covered with grass and debris and were thus difficult to make out. These roads were like religious scriptures that brāhmaṇas no longer study and that thus become corrupted and covered over with the passage of time.

COMMENTARY

Not studying the scriptures is compared to the unclean roads. The roads becoming overgrown with grass in time are like scriptures which become neglected and corrupted when no longer studied by the *brāhmaṇas*.

|| 10.20.17 ||

loka-bandhuṣu megheṣu vidyutaś cala-sauhṛdāḥ

sthairyaṁ na cakruḥ kāminyaḥ puruṣeṣu guṇiṣv iva

TRANSLATION

Though the clouds are the well-wishing friends of all living beings, the lightning, fickle in its affinities, moved from one group of clouds to another, like lusty women unfaithful even to virtuous men.

COMMENTARY

A prostitute cannot fix her attention on one man for long, even though the man may have good qualities such as intelligence. Similarly, the lightning moves from one cloud to another without lingering very long. This is a negative analogy.

|| 10.20.18 ||

dhanur viyati māhendraṁ nirguṇaṁ ca guṇiny abhāt

vyakte guṇa-vyatikare 'guṇavān puruṣo yathā

TRANSLATION

When the curved bow of Indra [the rainbow] appeared in the sky, which had the quality of thundering sound, it was unlike ordinary bows because it did not rest upon a string. Similarly, when the Supreme Lord appears in this world, which is

the interaction of the material qualities, He is unlike ordinary persons because He remains free from all material qualities and independent of all material conditions.

COMMENTARY

Just as the Lord, though without material qualities (*aguṇavān*) appears in the material world to perform pastimes, so the rainbow appears in the sky, which has the quality of sound (*gunini*), without a string (*nirguṇa*). This is a play on words.

|| 10.20.19 ||

na rarājoḍupaś channaḥ sva-jyotsnā-rājitair ghanaiḥ

ahaṁ-matyā bhāsitayā sva-bhāsā puruṣo yathā

TRANSLATION

During the rainy season the moon was prevented from appearing directly by the covering of the clouds, which were themselves illumined by the moon's rays. Similarly, the living being in material existence is prevented from appearing directly by the covering of the false ego, which is itself illumined by the consciousness of the pure soul.

COMMENTARY

In the rainy season, the moon does not shine, being covered by clouds which are themselves illuminated by the moon. This resembles the Lord (*puruṣa*) who is not visible, being hidden by His *avidyā-śakti*. which rises from Himself. This is a good example for the *jñānīs*.

|| 10.20.20 ||

meghāgamotsavā hṛṣṭāḥ pratyanandañ chikhaṇḍinaḥ

gṛheṣu tapta-nirviṇṇā yathācyuta-janāgame

TRANSLATION

The peacocks became festive and cried out a joyful greeting when they saw the clouds arrive, just as people distressed in household life feel pleasure when the pure devotees of the infallible Supreme Lord visit them.

COMMENTARY

The peacocks become happy and cry loudly upon seeing the approaching clouds and hearing the rumbling of thunder. This is just like *gṛhasta* Vaiṣṇavas who start to sing and dance in bliss after hearing Vaiṣṇava *bhajans*. This example is suitable for devotees.

|| 10.20.21 ||

pītvāpaḥ pādapāḥ padbhir āsan nānātma-mūrtayaḥ

prāk kṣāmās tapasā śrāntā yathā kāmānusevayā

TRANSLATION

The trees had grown thin and dry, but after they drank the newly fallen rainwater through their feet, their various bodily features blossomed. Similarly, one whose body has grown thin and weak from austerity again exhibits his healthy bodily features upon enjoying the material objects gained through that austerity.

COMMENTARY

As the trees become filled with sprouts, leaves and flowers during the rainy season, so the *tapasvī*, after becoming emaciated by penance, again fattens his body by enjoying material objects. This of course is unfavorable for those practicing detachment.

|| 10.20.22 ||

saraḥsv aśānta-rodhaḥsu nyūṣur aṅgāpi sārasāḥ

gṛheṣv aśānta-kṛtyeṣu grāmyā iva durāśayāḥ

TRANSLATION

The cranes continued dwelling on the shores of the lakes, although the shores were agitated during the rainy season, just as materialistic persons with contaminated minds always remain at home, despite the many disturbances there.

COMMENTARY

The cranes dwell intently on the lake shores, though littered with mud, thorns and weeds. This is similar to the materialistic person remaining home despite so many disturbances. This example is unfavorable.

|| 10.20.23 ||

jalaughair nirabhidyanta setavo varṣatīśvare

pāṣaṇḍinām asad-vādair veda-mārgāḥ kalau yathā

TRANSLATION

When Indra sent forth his rains, the floodwaters broke through the irrigation dikes in the agricultural fields, just as in the Kali-yuga the atheists' false theories break down the boundaries of Vedic injunctions.

COMMENTARY

Indra, thinking himself the Lord, pours down excessive rains which smash the irrigation walls in the fields; just as in Kali-yuga the materialists destroy *dharma*. Kali is compared to Indra; the activities of the materialists to the rains; and the destruction of Vedic *dharma* to the destruction of dikes. This is an unfavorable example.

|| 10.20.24 ||

vyamuñcan vāyubhir nunnā bhūtebhyaś cāmṛtaṁ ghanāḥ

yathāśiṣo viś-patayaḥ kāle kāle dvijeritāḥ

TRANSLATION

The clouds, impelled by the winds, released their nectarean water for the benefit of all living beings, just as kings, instructed by their brāhmaṇa priests, dispense charity to the citizens.

COMMENTARY

Just as a king (*viś-patayaḥ*) inspired by his priests (*dvijeritāḥ*) fulfills everyone's desires (*āsiṣo*), so the clouds, incited (*nunnā*) by the winds, release rain. The analogy of the king is positive.

|| 10.20.25 ||

evaṁ vanaṁ tad varṣiṣṭhaṁ pakva-kharjura-jambumat

go-gopālair vṛto rantuṁ sa-balaḥ prāviśad dhariḥ

TRANSLATION

When the Vṛndāvana forest had thus become resplendent, filled with ripe dates and jambu fruits, Lord Kṛṣṇa, surrounded by His cows and cowherd boyfriends and accompanied by Śrī Balarāma, entered that forest to enjoy.

COMMENTARY

After describing the rainy season, Śukadeva Gosvāmī relates Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in the monsoon forests in seven verses. Kṛṣṇa entered the forest of Vṛndāvana which was flourishing (*varṣiṣṭhaṁ*) with ripe date and *jambu* trees.

|| 10.20.26 ||

dhenavo manda-gāminya ūdho-bhāreṇa bhūyasā

yayur bhagavatāhūtā drutaṁ prītyā snuta-stanāḥ

TRANSLATION

The cows had to move slowly because of their weighty milk bags, but they quickly ran to the Supreme Personality of Godhead as soon as He called them, their affection for Him causing their udders to become wet.

COMMENTARY

Milk automatically flowed from the cows's udders due to their extreme motherly affection (*prītyā*) for Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.20.27 ||

vanaukasaḥ pramuditā vana-rājīr madhu-cyutaḥ

jala-dhārā girer nādād āsannā dadṛśe guhāḥ

TRANSLATION

The Lord saw the joyful aborigine girls of the forest, the trees dripping sweet sap, and the mountain waterfalls, whose resounding indicated that there were caves nearby.

COMMENTARY

In the monsoon forests Kṛṣṇa saw the joyful Pulinda women, the honey pouring down the trees, the waterfalls flowing from the mountains, and far off caves, which appeared to be nearby from the echoing sound.

|| 10.20.28 ||

kvacid vanaspati-kroḍe guhāyāṁ cābhivarṣati

nirviśya bhagavān reme kanda-mūla-phalāśanaḥ

TRANSLATION

When it rained, the Lord would sometimes enter a cave or the hollow of a tree to play and to eat roots and fruits.

COMMENTARY

When it rained (*abhi varṣati*) Kṛṣṇa would run and enter the hollow of a tree or a cave and amuse Himself by eating radish. There are two types of radish: round ones and long ones.

|| 10.20.29 ||

dadhy-odanaṁ samānītaṁ śilāyāṁ salilāntike

sambhojanīyair bubhuje gopaiḥ saṅkarṣaṇānvitaḥ

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa would take His meal of boiled rice and yogurt, sent from home, in the company of Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa and the cowherd boys who regularly ate with Him. They would all sit down to eat on a large stone near the water.

COMMENTARY

Servants would bring food from Kṛṣṇa's house to a place called "Chak." Kṛṣṇa sat on a stone slab near the water. Even today people can see that eating place on the bank of a *kuṇḍa*.

|| 10.20.30-31 ||

śādvalopari saṁviśya carvato mīlitekṣaṇān

tṛptān vṛṣān vatsatarān gāś ca svodho-bhara-śramāḥ

prāvṛṭ-śriyaṁ ca tāṁ vīkṣya sarva-kāla-sukhāvahām

bhagavān pūjayāṁ cakre ātma-śakty-upabṛṁhitām

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa watched the contented bulls, calves and cows sitting on the green grass and grazing with closed eyes, and He saw that the cows were tired from the burden of their heavy milk bags. Thus observing the beauty and opulence of Vṛndāvana's rainy season, a perennial source of great happiness, the Lord offered all respect to that season, which was expanded from His own internal potency.

|| 10.20.32 ||

evaṁ nivasatos tasmin rāma-keśavayor vraje

śarat samabhavad vyabhrā svacchāmbv-aparuṣānilā

TRANSLATION

While Lord Rāma and Lord Keśava were thus dwelling in Vṛndāvana, the fall season arrived, when the sky is cloudless, the water clear and the wind gentle.

COMMENTARY

The description of autumn begins here by saying that the water became clear and the wind blew gently.

|| 10.20.33 ||

śaradā nīrajotpattyā nīrāṇi prakṛtiṁ yayuḥ

bhraṣṭānām iva cetāṁsi punar yoga-niṣevayā

TRANSLATION

The autumn season, which regenerated the lotus flowers, also restored the various bodies of water to their original purity, just as the process of devotional service purifies the minds of the fallen yogīs when they return to it.

COMMENTARY

Due to the autumn season, the lotus flowers blossom and the lakes become crystal clear. Similarly, by engaging in devotional service the heart becomes purified and then Śrī Kṛṣṇa appears. The autumn season is compared to devotional service, the lake to the heart; and the appearance of Kṛṣṇa is compared to the lotus. This is a positive example.

|| 10.20.34 ||

vyomno 'bbhraṁ bhūta-śābalyaṁ bhuvaḥ paṅkam apāṁ malam

śaraj jahārāśramiṇāṁ kṛṣṇe bhaktir yathāśubham

TRANSLATION

Autumn cleared the sky of clouds, let the animals get out of their crowded living conditions, cleaned the earth of its covering of mud, and purified the water of contamination, in the same way that loving service rendered to Lord Kṛṣṇa frees the members of the four spiritual orders from their respective troubles.

COMMENTARY

The autumn season removed the clouds in the sky, the crowded living conditions, the mud from the earth and the cloudy water. This is like *bhakti*, arising through devotional association, which removes the suffering produced by executing one's duties in the four *aśramas*. However, when one becomes fully Kṛṣṇa conscious, he is no longer obligated

to perform the various duties of a particular *aśrama*, be it *brahmacārī, gṛhastha, vānaprastha* or *sannyāsa*.

As *bhakti* removes the suffering a *brahmacārī* undergoes by humbly serving his guru by herding cows and other menial acts, so the autumn season removed the clouds in the sky. As *bhakti* removes the suffering a *gṛhastha* experiences by associating with his family members during *śraddhā* rites and other domestic duties, so the autumn season removed the suffering of living together in close quarters during the inclement weather of the rainy season, by enabling everyone to freely move here and there, As *bhakti* removes the suffering of the *vānaprastha* who covers his body with earth, the autumn season dried up the mud from the earth. *Bhakti* removes the suffering of the *sannyāsi* who struggles to meditate on the Brahman (*kleśo 'dhikataras teṣām avyaktāsakta-cetasām*: "For those whose minds are attached to the unmanifested, impersonal feature of the Lord, advancement is exceedingly painful" (Bg.12.5). Similarly, the autumn season removed the dirt and debris from the rivers and lakes. This is a positive series of analogies.

|| 10.20.35 ||

sarva-svaṁ jaladā hitvā virejuḥ śubhra-varcasaḥ

yathā tyaktaiṣaṇāḥ śāntā munayo mukta-kilbiṣāḥ

TRANSLATION

The clouds, having given up all they possessed, shone forth with purified effulgence, just like peaceful sages who have given up all material desires and are thus free of all sinful propensities.

COMMENTARY

As *munis* become purified by giving up all sinful propensities (*mukta-kilbiṣāḥ*) and material desires (*tyaktaiṣaṇāḥ*) to attain sons, wealth and followers, similarly after expelling all their rain, the clouds become pure and white in color. This is a positive analogy.

|| 10.20.36 ||

girayo mumucus toyaṁ kvacin na mumucuḥ śivam

yathā jñānāmṛtaṁ kāle jñānino dadate na vā

TRANSLATION

During this season the mountains sometimes released their pure water and sometimes did not, just as experts in transcendental science sometimes give the nectar of transcendental knowledge and sometimes do not.

COMMENTARY

Jñānāmṛtaṁ here refers to teachings about the Supreme Lord, and *jñāninaḥ* means experts in devotional wisdom such as Nārada, Prahlāda and Jaḍa Bharata. They gave knowledge to the hunter, Rahūgaṇa, and the children of the demons but not to others. They give to those fortunate souls who desire to know. In a similar way, in autumn the clear water from the mountains only flows in some canals.

|| 10.20.37 ||

naivāvidan kṣīyamāṇaṁ jalaṁ gādha-jale-carāḥ

yathāyur anv-ahaṁ kṣayyaṁ narā mūḍhāḥ kuṭumbinaḥ

TRANSLATION

The fish swimming in the increasingly shallow water did not at all understand that the water was diminishing, just as foolish family men cannot see how the time they have left to live is diminishing with every passing day.

COMMENTARY

As an ignorant man attached to his family does not realize that his lifespan is decreasing at every moment, foolish fish play in the shallow water, not realizing that it is decreasing at every moment. This is a negative analogy.

|| 10.20.38 ||

gādha-vāri-carās tāpam avindañ charad-arka-jam

yathā daridraḥ kṛpaṇaḥ kuṭumby avijitendriyaḥ

TRANSLATION

Just as a miserly, poverty-stricken person overly absorbed in family life suffers because he cannot control his senses, the fish swimming in the shallow water had to suffer the heat of the autumn sun.

COMMENTARY

As a poor man suffers while supporting a large family, so the fish in scarce water must endure the painful heat of the autumn sun. In the previous verse a wealthy family man was described, whereas here the negative effects of a poor family man are described. Or this verse can be taken to refer to the suffering of the attached family man mentioned in the previous verse.

|| 10.20.39 ||

śanaiḥ śanair jahuḥ paṅkaṁ sthalāny āmaṁ ca vīrudhaḥ

yathāhaṁ-mamatāṁ dhīrāḥ śarīrādiṣv anātmasu

TRANSLATION

Gradually the different areas of land gave up their muddy condition and the plants grew past their unripe stage, in the same way that sober sages give up egotism and possessiveness. These are based on things different from the real self—namely, the material body and its by-products.

COMMENTARY

As the intelligent person gives up everything unrelated to the soul (*anātmasu*), the Paramātmā and Kṛṣṇa, namely the body, false ego and possessiveness, and tries to develop attachment to Kṛṣṇa, so the fields give up their muddy condition and plants give up their unripe state.

|| 10.20.40 ||

niścalāmbur abhūt tūṣṇīṁ samudraḥ śarad-āgame

ātmany uparate samyaṅ munir vyuparatāgamaḥ

TRANSLATION

With the arrival of autumn, the ocean and the lakes became silent, their water still, just like a sage who has desisted from all material activities and given up his recitation of Vedic mantras.

COMMENTARY

As the sage with a motionless mind stops chanting the *Vedas* (*vyuparata āgamaḥ*), with the coming of autumn, the lakes and ocean become motionless and stop roaring. This refers to a place called Satovasa, west of Mathurā. This is a positive comparison.

|| 10.20.41 ||

kedārebhyas tv apo 'gṛhṇan karṣakā dṛḍha-setubhiḥ

yathā prāṇaiḥ sravaj jñānam tan-nirodhena yoginaḥ

TRANSLATION

In the same way that the practitioners of yoga bring their senses under strict control to check their consciousness from flowing out through the agitated senses, the farmers erected strong mud banks to keep the water within their rice fields from draining out.

COMMENTARY

The farmer keeps the water lying in the fields after the rainy season from running out with dykes, just as the yogi controls his senses to prevent his consciousness from flowing out due to agitation of the senses. This is a positive comparison.

|| 10.20.42 ||

śarad-arkāmśu-jāmṣ tāpān bhūtānām uḍupo 'harat

dehābhimāna-jam bodho mukundo vraja-yoṣitām

TRANSLATION

The autumn moon relieved all creatures of the suffering caused by the sun's rays, just as wisdom relieves a person of the misery caused by his identifying with his material body and as Lord Mukunda relieves Vṛndāvana's ladies of the distress caused by their separation from Him.

COMMENTARY

As knowledge takes away the suffering arising from bodily identification, as Mukunda takes away the suffering of the women of Vraja, so the rising moon takes away the heat of the mid-day sun.

|| 10.20.43 ||

kham aśobhata nirmeghaṁ śarad-vimala-tārakam

sattva-yuktaṁ yathā cittaṁ śabda-brahmārtha-darśanam

TRANSLATION

Free of clouds and filled with clearly visible stars, the autumn sky shone brilliantly, just like the spiritual consciousness of one who has directly experienced the purport of the Vedic scriptures.

COMMENTARY

As the heart which directly experiences (*darśanam*) conclusive Vedic wisdom (*sabda-brahmārtha*) is endowed with spiritual goodness (*sattva yuktaṁ*) and shines brilliantly, so the moon and stars shine brightly in the cloudless sky of autumn. The sky is compared to the heart, the absence of clouds is compared to excellence, and the autumn season is compared to the *Vedas*. The stars are compared to *niṣkāma karma, jñāna-yoga* and *tapa-yoga*. And the moon, the leader of all the stars, is compared to *bhakti*. This is a positive comparison.

|| 10.20.44 ||

akhaṇḍa-maṇḍalo vyomni rarājoḍu-gaṇaiḥ śaśī

yathā yadu-patiḥ kṛṣṇo vṛṣṇi-cakrāvṛto bhuvi

TRANSLATION

The full moon shone in the sky, surrounded by stars, just as Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the Yadu dynasty, shone brilliantly on the earth, surrounded by all the Vṛṣṇis.

COMMENTARY

The full moon (*akhaṇḍa maṇḍala*) is compared to *svayaṁ bhagavān* Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the full manifestation of the Absolute Truth. As the Lord of the Yadus (*yadu-patiḥ*), Kṛṣṇa was surrounded by prominent members (*vṛṣṇi-cakra*) of the Vṛṣṇi dynasty such as Nanda, Upananda, Vasudeva and Akrūra, who are compared to the stars in the sky. This comparison is favorable for meditation.

|| 10.20.45 ||

āśliṣya sama-śītoṣṇaṁ prasūna-vana-mārutam

janās tāpaṁ jahur gopyo na kṛṣṇa-hṛta-cetasaḥ

TRANSLATION

Except for the gopīs, whose hearts had been stolen by Kṛṣṇa, the people could forget their suffering by embracing the wind coming from the flower-filled forest. This wind was neither hot nor cold.

COMMENTARY

The wind of the autumn is neither hot nor cold (*sama śītoṣṇa*). By embracing this wind everyone felt relief from the heat, except the gopīs, who were burning in the pain of separation from Kṛṣṇa. Instead of decreasing their suffering, it increased it. Authorities explain the sequence of analogies in this verse as follows: Just like the gopīs, whose hearts had been stolen by Kṛṣṇa, could not embrace Him to reclaim their hearts, so the general masses did embrace the wind to get relief from the heat.

|| 10.20.46 ||

gāvo mṛgāḥ khagā nāryaḥ puṣpiṇyaḥ śaradābhavan

anvīyamānāḥ sva-vṛṣaiḥ phalair īśa-kriyā iva

TRANSLATION

By the influence of the autumn season, all the cows, doe, women and female birds became fertile and were followed by their respective mates in search of sexual enjoyment, just as activities performed for the service of the Supreme Lord are automatically followed by all beneficial results.

COMMENTARY

The cows, doe and female birds, though unwilling, were forcibly engaged in copulation by their respective mates (*sva vṛṣaiḥ*) and became pregnant. This is compared to the worship of the Lord (*īsa-kriyā*), which, though performed without desire for results, yields many material results such as happiness and enjoyment.

|| 10.20.47 ||

udahṛṣyan vārijāni sūryotthāne kumud vinā

rājñā tu nirbhayā lokā yathā dasyūn vinā nṛpa

TRANSLATION

O King Parīkṣit, when the autumn sun rose, all the lotus flowers blossomed happily, except the night-blooming kumut, just as in the presence of a strong ruler everyone becomes fearless, except the thieves.

COMMENTARY

The night-blooming lotus flowers (*kumud*) are compared to thieves (*dasyūn*). This idea comes from the syllable *ku*, which means low class, and *mud*, which means joy. Low class fellows like thieves find pleasure at night by stealing. Just as all people except the thieves are happy when a powerful king sits on the throne, when the sun rises in the morning, all the lotuses are happy and bloom, except the night blooming lotus.

|| 10.20.48 ||

pura-grāmeṣv āgrayaṇair indriyaiś ca mahotsavaiḥ

babhau bhūḥ pakva-śaṣyāḍhyā kalābhyāṁ nitarāṁ hareḥ

TRANSLATION

In all the towns and villages people held great festivals, performing the Vedic fire sacrifice for honoring and tasting the first grains of the new harvest, along with similar celebrations that followed local custom and tradition. Thus the earth, rich with newly grown grain and especially beautified by the presence of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, shone beautifully as an expansion of the Supreme Lord.

COMMENTARY

The word *āgrayaṇaih* refers to a Vedic sacrifice called Navānna, wherein the freshly harvested grains are offered to the Deity in the temple. The *Smṛti* scriptures say the Navānna ceremony should not be performed on *nanda-tithi*, while Viṣṇu is sleeping during Cāturmāsya, during the waning phase of the moon (*kṛṣṇa-pakṣa*), or during the months of Kārtika and Pauṣa. The Navānna ceremony occurs in Agrah*ā*yaṇa month (Mārgaśīrṣa, Nov.-Dec.) just after Utthana Ekādaśī. However, because it takes place

right after the autumn season it is said to take place during the autumn. The word *indriyaiś* refers to sacrifices for Indra to satisfy the senses.

This description took place before the year in which Kṛṣṇa stopped Indra's worship. Just as the earth (*bhūḥ*), a potency (*kalā-śakti*) of Lord Hari (*hareḥ*), shown beautifully by the presence of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma (*abhyāṁ*), so the earth became resplendent with the festivals of Navānna and the worship of Indra in the villages. The word *hareḥ* also means moon, so *kalābhyāṁ hareḥ* means by the phases of the moon. Just as the earth became splendid with the festivals held by the king celebrating the phases of the moon on the first and second *tithis* of the waxing moon as it rose in the evening, so the earth became beautified with the many festivals held in the villages.

|| 10.20.49 ||

vaṇiṅ-muni-nṛpa-snātā nirgamyārthān prapedire

varṣa-ruddhā yathā siddhāḥ sva-piṇḍān kāla āgate

TRANSLATION

The merchants, sages, kings and Brahmācārī students, kept in by the rain, were at last free to go out and attain their desired objects, just as those who achieve perfection in this life can, when the proper time comes, leave the material body and attain their respective forms.

COMMENTARY

The merchants, sages, kings and students, who were confined to their rooms by the rain, left when the rain stopped (*varsa ruddhā*) and attained their desired goals (*arthān*), namely money, independence, power and knowledge. This resembles realized transcendentalists (*siddhāḥ*) who, at the time of death (*kāle*), attain forms (*piṇḍān*) like the eternal associates of the Lord (*sva*).

Thus ends the commentary on the Twentieth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Twenty-one

The Gopīs Glorify the Song of Kṛṣṇa's Flute (*veṇu-gīta*)

|| 10.21.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

itthaṁ śarat-svaccha-jalaṁ padmākara-sugandhinā

nyaviśad vāyunā vātaṁ sa -go-gopālako 'cyutaḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus the Vṛndāvana forest was filled with transparent autumnal waters and cooled by breezes perfumed with the fragrance of lotus flowers growing in the clear lakes. The infallible Lord, accompanied by His cows and cowherd boyfriends, entered that Vṛndāvana forest.

COMMENTARY

This chapter describes how the gopīs, being pained by Kṛṣṇa's flute song, repeatedly sing the glories of that flute. They also praised the animals, demigoddesses and the forest of Vṛndāvana. Although staying in the village, the gopīs relate what they see through the transcendental eyes of their hearts, namely the various charming pastimes Kṛṣṇa enacts upon entering the forest of Vṛndāvana. After describing the beauty of the autumn season, Śukadeva Gosvāmī first describes Kṛṣṇa's entrance into the Vṛndāvana

forest, which is decorated with the sweetness of autumn, before portraying the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa's flute song which is intimately related to it.

The wind became fragrant and cool (*padmākara sugandhinā*) by passing over the lotus filled lakes. Kṛṣṇa, along with His cows and cowherd boys, entered the forest permeated (*vātaṁ*) by this sweetly scented breeze. The word *vāyunā* (wind) is singular instead of plural to indicate a very gentle breeze. The word *madhu-pati* of the next verse is the subject of this verse if the alternate reading of this verse substitutes the word *vanam* for *acyutah*.

|| 10.21.2 ||

kusumita-vanarāji-śuṣmi-bhṛṅga dvija-kula-ghuṣṭa-saraḥ-sarin-mahīdhram

madhupatir avagāhya cārayan gāḥ saha-paśu-pāla-balaś cukūja veṇum

TRANSLATION

The lakes, rivers and hills of Vṛndāvana resounded with the sounds of maddened bees and flocks of birds moving about the flowering trees. In the company of the cowherd boys and Balarāma, Madhupati [Śrī Kṛṣṇa] entered that forest, and while herding the cows He began to vibrate His flute.

COMMENTARY

As Kṛṣṇa (*madhupati*) entered (*avagāhya*) the forest with its mountains, lakes, rivers and flowering groves, He skillfully blended His flute song (*cukūja veṇum*) with the lovely sounds of Vṛndāvana's chirping birds and buzzing bees. The word *madhu-pati* means the Lord of spring (the month of Madhu). The inference is that when Kṛṣṇa, the personification of spring, entered the forests in the autumn, the forests became beautiful with spring flowers.

Kṛṣṇa went along with Balarāma and the cowherd boys (*sa paśu pāla bala*) to herd the cows (*gocarane*), but it is not mentioned here that they played flutes. Only Kṛṣṇa played the flute. Therefore, the *veṇu-gīta* (song of the flute and title of this chapter) came from Kṛṣṇa's flute only.

|| 10.21.3 ||

tad vraja-striya āśrutya veṇu-gītaṁ smarodayam

kāścit parokṣaṁ kṛṣṇasya sva-sakhībhyo 'nvavarṇayan

TRANSLATION

When the young ladies in the cowherd village of Vraja heard the song of Kṛṣṇa's flute, which arouses the influence of Cupid, some of them privately began describing Kṛṣṇa's qualities to their intimate friends.

COMMENTARY

Hearing Kṛṣṇa's flute song, the gopīs began describing indirectly (*parokṣaṁ*) to their friends about Kṛṣṇa entering the forest. The word *parokṣa* (indirectly) is used because the gopīs were located far away from Kṛṣṇa in the village of Vraja.

|| 10.21.4 ||

tad varṇayitum ārabdhāḥ smarantyaḥ kṛṣṇa-ceṣṭitam

nāśakan smara-vegena vikṣipta-manaso nṛpa

TRANSLATION

The cowherd girls began to speak about Kṛṣṇa, but when they remembered His activities, O King, the power of Cupid disturbed their minds, and thus they could not speak.

COMMENTARY

When the gopīs attempted to describe the song of the flute, they could not do so because their hearts became overcome with strong desires for Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.21.5 ||

barhāpīḍaṁ naṭa-vara-vapuḥ karṇayoḥ karṇikāraṁ

bibhrad vāsaḥ kanaka-kapiśaṁ vaijayantīṁ ca mālām

randhrān veṇor adhara-sudhayāpūrayan gopa-vṛndair

vṛndāraṇyaṁ sva-pada-ramaṇaṁ prāviśad gīta-kīrtiḥ

TRANSLATION

Wearing a peacock-feather ornament upon His head, blue karṇikāra flowers on His ears, a yellow garment as brilliant as gold, and the Vaijayantī garland, Lord Kṛṣṇa exhibited His transcendental form as the greatest of dancers as He entered the forest of Vṛndāvana, beautifying it with the marks of His footprints. He filled the holes of His flute with the nectar of His lips, and the cowherd boys sang His glories.

|| 10.21.6 ||

iti veṇu-ravaṁ rājan sarva-bhūta-manoharam

śrutvā vraja-striyaḥ sarvā varṇayantyo 'bhirebhire

TRANSLATION

O King, when the young ladies in Vraja heard the sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute, which captivates the minds of all living beings, they all embraced one another and began describing it.

COMMENTARY

Seeing that the gopīs could not speak, Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī, being omniscient, began the description of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes according to the mood of their intense love. Kṛṣṇa was bedecked with a peacock feather (*barhāpīḍaṁ*), and a *karṇikāra* flower on His ears. *Karṇikāra* (flower) is singular whereas *karṇayoḥ* (ears) is in the dual form, to indicate that sometimes Kṛṣṇa wore one *karṇikāra* flower on the left ear and sometimes on the right ear to express the intoxication of His youth. He wore a *vaijayantī* garland made of flowers of five different colors. Thus Kṛṣṇa's beautiful body looked like the best of dancers (*naṭa-vara-vapuḥ*). The use of the word *bibhrat* (wore) indicates that Kṛṣṇa purposefully dressed in an artful way to display His youthful charms in order to incite the romantic desires of the gopīs.

Since the gopīs might have criticized the flute for having holes in it, Kṛṣṇa filled the holes with the nectar of His lips. Though the flute is non-living, the touch of the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's lips brought it to life, and empowered it to madden the three worlds. Then, considering the flute to be dull, lifeless and unqualified for such work, the vibration exudes from its holes and enters the ears and minds of the Vraja-gopīs. The implication is that the flute vibration makes itself successful in accomplishing its purpose of fully exhibiting its powers by conquering the Vraja-gopīs with Cupid.

|| 10.21.7 ||

śrī-gopya ūcuḥ

akṣaṇvatāṁ phalam idaṁ na paraṁ vidāmaḥ

sakhyaḥ paśūn anuviveśayator vayasyaiḥ

vaktraṁ vrajeśa-sutayor anaveṇu-juṣṭaṁ

yair vā nipītam anurakta-kaṭākṣa-mokṣam

TRANSLATION

The cowherd girls said: O friends, those eyes that see the beautiful faces of the sons of Mahārāja Nanda are certainly fortunate. As these two sons enter the forest, surrounded by Their friends, driving the cows before Them, They hold Their flutes to Their mouths and glance lovingly upon the residents of Vṛndāvana. For those who have eyes, we think there is no greater object of vision.

COMMENTARY

My [Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura] only goal in life is the Vraja-gopīs, who, being attracted by the nectar shower from Krsna's flute, ran out of their houses, and whose sweet words repeated here enable us to relish that nectar too.

"The gopīs meant to say, 'O friends, if you simply remain in the shackles of family life in this material world, what will you ever get to see? The creator has granted us these eyes, so let us see the most wonderful thing there is to see, Krsna.'"

The gopīs were aware that their mothers-in-law or sisters-in-law might hear their romantic words and disapprove, so to hide their true feelings they said, *akṣaṇvatāṁ phalam*: "To see Krsna is the goal for all persons and not simply ourselves." That is the superficial meaning, but the hidden implication is, "Those faces give bliss to everyone in Vṛndāvana forest, even the birds and beasts—but not to us, staying in our houses far away."

In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.5.27) Vasudeva said, "O Nanda, my son (*mama sutaḥ*) Balarāma thinks of you as if you were His father (*tātaṁ bhavantaṁ manvāno*)." Also Śukadeva said, "Balarāma offered respects to His parents Nanda and Yaśodā and they blessed Him." (SB 10.65.2) By such statements therefore Balarāma was commonly known as Nanda's son. Therefore in this verse the gopīs describe Balarāma the son of Nanda Mahārāja (*vrajeśa-sutayor*).

However, there is a hidden meaning in the phrase *vaktraṁ vrajeśa-sutayor*, "faces of the sons of the king of Vraja, Nanda Mahārāja." The word *vaktraṁ* (face) can mean that face among the two of them, which was turning back (*anu:anaveṇu*), playing the flute. The word *vā* with *nipītam* (to drink with intensity) also indicates seeing, touching, hearing,

smelling or (*va*) tasting that face. If the alternate reading *vai* is used instead of *va*, it means certainly they taste.

In other words, the gopīs are saying, “Those who give up all shyness and steadiness to drink the nectar of that face playing the flute, among the two sons herding cows in the forest along with their friends, have fortunate senses and not others. Therefore we intend to say, today let us abandon all family tradition, shyness and self-control.”

Another gopī said, “Yes! Let us see, touch, hear and smell Krsna, but how is it possible since we are so shy?”

One gopī replied, “That face releases sidelong glances (*kaṭākṣa-mokṣam*) upon anyone who becomes lovingly attracted (*anurakta*) to Him. Krsna will search you out, and release the arrow of His enchanting glance. When it strikes, you will become agitated with love, forget all your shyness and abandon your self-control. Then you will look without shyness on that face.”

|| 10.21.8 ||

cūta-pravāla-barha-stabakotpalābja

mālānupṛkta-paridhāna-vicitra-veśau

madhye virejatur alaṁ paśu-pāla-goṣṭhyāṁ
raṅge yathā naṭa-varau kvaca gāyamānau

TRANSLATION

Dressed in a charming variety of garments, upon which Their garlands rest, and decorating Themselves with peacock feathers, lotuses, lilies, newly grown mango sprouts and clusters of flower buds, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma shine forth magnificently among the assembly of cowherd boys. They look just like the best of dancers appearing on a dramatic stage, and sometimes They sing.

COMMENTARY

One gopī said, “But how will we deal with this disgrace? We should not go.” A second gopī replied, “No, we should go anyway.”

The first gopī said, “Because Kṛṣṇa is with Baladeva, our motive in going will not be fulfilled.”

The second gopī replied, “Therefore while remaining concealed, we can peer through the leaves of the creepers, and taste the nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s beauty, hear His singing and see His dancing. Then we can quickly return home.” That is the intention of this verse.

Decorating Themselves with tender mango leaf sprouts (*cuta-pravāla*), peacock feathers (*barha*) and bunches of flowers (*stabaka*) in Their hair, lotus buds over Their ears, a play lotus in the right hand, a garland around the neck, and wearing sewn garments colored red, yellow and black like those of an actor, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma looked like the best of dancers arrayed in colorful dress.

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma danced along with the boys and sometimes sang (*gāya mānau*). *Gāyamānau* can also mean that Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were satisfied (*māna*) with the singing (*gāya*) of others who were praising Them. Or it can mean that Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were proud of Their own singing: “No one in the three worlds can sing like Us. Who are you insignificant cowherd boys?”

|| 10.21.9 ||

gopyaḥ kim ācarad ayaṁ kuśalaṁ sma veṇur

dāmodarādhara-sudhām api gopīkānām

bhuṅkte svayaṁ yad avaśiṣṭa-rāsaṁ hradinyo

hṛṣyat-tvaco ’śru mumucus taravo yathāryaḥ

TRANSLATION

My dear gopīs, what auspicious activities must the flute have performed to enjoy the nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s lips independently and leave only a taste for us gopīs, for whom that nectar is actually meant! The forefathers of the flute, the bamboo trees, shed tears of pleasure. His mother, the river on whose bank the bamboo was born, feels jubilation, and therefore her blooming lotus flowers are standing like hair on her body.

COMMENTARY

The gopīs said, “This flute has created a problem for us, drowning us in an ocean of disgrace.” That is expressed in this verse.

Though the words *vaṁśī* and *muralī* are in feminine gender, the word *veṇu* is masculine, like the word *dāra*, a masculine word meaning wife.

"What auspicious activities (*kuśalaṁ*) did the *veṇu* (flute) perform to become Kṛṣṇa's wife? It did not do anything auspicious because it took birth as a nonmoving creature, a low birth resulting from a lack of piety. Yet that flute drinks the nectar of Dāmodara's lips (*dāmodarādhara*). Can we tolerate that? No, because it is the gopīs' right to taste that nectar (*gopīkānām*). After all, Kṛṣṇa was born as a *gopa* and we were born as gopīs. Therefore we have the right to taste those lips, not the flute."

"Furthermore the flute has the audacity to manifest as male (*venu*) in form and still enjoy (*bhuṅkte*) Kṛṣṇa. Moreover this enjoyment is done without marriage, utterly alone and by thievery. The flute then brazenly announces the fact to the real owners of the treasure, namely us, by blowing air. It is not just the ordinary sound of blowing air; it is the cries of the bliss the flute experiences in association with Kṛṣṇa. And we are forced to hear that sound! The flute is enjoying so much that it leaves nothing left, not even a morsel. Though we are the rightful claimants of the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's lips, that flute leaves nothing for us, not even his own remnants. Such is his audacity!"

"Others who are devoid of piety also act in the same way. Seeing the flute enjoying the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's lips, the river becomes happy, blooming with lotuses, standing like hair on her body. The trees pouring out their honey seem to be weeping in bliss. Upon hearing Kṛṣṇa's glories, the devotees shed tears of joy and experience horripilation. Similarly, upon hearing Kṛṣṇa's flute song the rivers and trees are also displaying symptoms of *bhāva*."

"The rivers are female friends of the flute and the trees are male friends or messengers. Thus the flute, rivers and trees are all our enemies. Therefore where can we hide the flute, so that it does not get the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's lips?" Here the gopīs manifest the *sañcārī-bhāva* of envy, which has arisen from their intense love for Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.21.10 ||

vṛndāvanaṁ sakhī bhuvo vitanoti kīṛtiṁ

yad devakī-suta-padāmbuja-labdha-lakṣmi

govinda-veṇum anu matta-mayūra-nṛtyaṁ
prekṣyādri-sānv-avaratānya-samasta-sattvam

TRANSLATION

O friend, Vṛndāvana is spreading the glory of the earth, having obtained the treasure of the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī. The peacocks dance madly when they hear Govinda's flute, and when other creatures see them from the hilltops, they all become stunned.

COMMENTARY

"The forest of Vṛndāvana has now become even sweeter because it is the place of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. Therefore let us go there to see that place. There is no fault in doing that." With this in mind one gopī spoke.

"Vṛndāvana is spreading (*vi-tanoti* means *viśeṣa bhavena tanoti*) the glories of the earth especially, as being better than Svarga, because (*yat*) the earth is marked with the symbols of the flag and thunderbolt from the lotus feet of Devakīnandana (the son of Yaśodā)."

The name Devakī also refers to mother Yaśodā, as stated in the *Bṛhad-viṣṇu Purāna*:

> *dve nāmnī nanda-bhāryāyā yaśodā devakīti ca*
>
> *ataḥ sakhyam abhūt tasya devakyā śauri-jāyayā*
>
> "The wife of Nanda Mahārāja had two names, Yaśodā and also Devakī. Therefore it was natural that she became friends with Vasudeva's wife named Devakī." Thus *devakī-suta* (the son of Devakī) in this verse refers to Yaśodānandana, Kṛṣṇa, the son of mother Yaśodā.

A gopī said, "It is not possible to find the symbols of Kṛṣṇa's feet decorating the abode of Vaikuṇṭha. Nor is it possible to see to such a beautiful cow pasturing area there. In Vṛndāvana, the peacocks ask Kṛṣṇa, 'Govinda, please make us dance.' Thus Kṛṣṇa plays His flute, and they surround Him in a circle and dance madly in time with the rhythm of His melody. And while standing in the midst of their dancing, Kṛṣṇa also sings and dances. Then those peacocks, who are fully satisfied with His flute recital, out of gratitude offer for His pleasure, their own divine feathers. In the usual manner of musicians, Kṛṣṇa gladly accepts their offerings and places a peacock feather upon His turban. Gentle animals such as deer and doves greatly relish Kṛṣṇa's transcendental performance, and to get a good view they flock to the peaks of hills. Then, as they watch the breathtaking program, they become stunned (*avaratānya*) in ecstasy."

Another gopī said, “Oh sakhīs! We intensely desire to relish Kṛṣṇa’s dancing, singing and flute playing, and to see all those beasts, deer, doves and birds assembled on the hill slopes, who have become stunned in bliss.”

|| 10.21.11 ||

dhanyāḥ sma mūḍha-gatayo ’pi hariṇya etā

yā nanda-nandanam upātta-vicitra-veśam

ākarṇya veṇu-raṇitaṁ saha-kṛṣṇa-sārāḥ

pūjāṁ dadhur viracitāṁ praṇayāvalokaiḥ

TRANSLATION

Blessed are all these foolish deer because they have approached Mahārāja Nanda’s son, who is gorgeously dressed and is playing on His flute. Indeed, both the doe and the bucks worship the Lord with looks of love and affection.

COMMENTARY

A gopī said, “Alas, though we are more intelligent than the deer, our life has become useless since we cannot meet Kṛṣṇa. The less intelligent creatures have made their lives successful by meeting Kṛṣṇa. How is that?” This sentiment is expressed in this verse.

Sma (certainly) is an exclamation of astonishment or lamentation. “Oh! (*sma*) We do not have such good fortune.” There are two readings: *veṇu-raṇitam* and *veṇu-riphitam*. The meaning is the same: sound of the flute.

The gopī said, “Hearing the sound of the flute, the does worship (*pūjāṁ dadhuh*) Kṛṣṇa with their affectionate glances. Then what can be said of the glances that we intelligent beings have given to Kṛṣṇa?”

The gopīs were thinking as follows: “The female deer can approach Kṛṣṇa along with their husbands because Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate object of affection for the male deer, [*kṛṣṇa-sārāḥ* means male deer, and also those who take Kṛṣṇa alone as the object of worship] Because of their affection for Kṛṣṇa, the bucks are encouraged by seeing their wives attracted to Him and thus consider their household lives fortunate. Indeed, they become joyful upon seeing how their wives are searching after Kṛṣṇa, and, following

along, they urge their wives to run to the Lord. On the other hand, our husbands are jealous of Kṛṣṇa, and because of their lack of devotion to Him they cannot even stand to smell His fragrance. Therefore what is the use of our lives?"

|| 10.21.12 ||

kṛṣṇaṁ nirīkṣya vanitotsava-rūpa-śīlaṁ

śrutvā ca tat-kvaṇita-veṇu-vivikta-gītam

devyo vimāna-gatayaḥ smara-nunna-sārā

bhraśyat-prasūna-kabarā mumuhur vinīvyaḥ

TRANSLATION

Kṛṣṇa's beauty and character create a festival for all women. Indeed, when the demigods' wives flying in airplanes with their husbands catch sight of Him and hear His resonant flute-song, their hearts are shaken by Cupid, and they become so bewildered that the flowers fall out of their hair and their belts loosen.

COMMENTARY

One gopī said, "Since we are ordinary gopīs and Kṛṣṇa is a *gopa* from our village, our conjugal attraction for Him is natural. Though He is appearing among the human beings, even the demi-goddesses become mad after Kṛṣṇa. Then what is so astonishing that we poor, earthly women become completely conquered by Kṛṣṇa's love laden glances and the nectar of His flute?"

"Seeing the exquisite form and sterling qualities of Kṛṣṇa (*rūpa-śīlaṁ*), the heavenly women become blissful (*vanita utsava*). Their hearts overcome with conjugal desire (*smara-nunna-sārā*). The flowers fall from their hair as it becomes undone and their belts loosen (*vinīvya*). Then they faint (*mumuhuh*) and fall from the laps of their husbands while flying in the sky in their airplanes (*vimāna gatayaḥ*)."

The bewildered celestial damsels depicted here are showing the symptoms of an ecstatic transformation (*anubhāva*) known as *moṭṭāyita*. When a heroine sees, remembers, or hears the words of her hero, Kṛṣṇa, lusty desires are aroused in her heart and she hankers for His association. This is the state of *moṭṭāyita*.

A gopī said, "The intelligent demigods, although noting the condition of their wives, do not become envious. Rather, thinking themselves most fortunate, they regularly take

their wives along to see Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana. But our husbands are envious. Thus the low born deer and the high born wives of the demigods are very fortunate. But we poor humans in an intermediate position are the most unfortunate."

|| 10.21.13 ||

gāvaś ca kṛṣṇa-mukha-nirgata-veṇu-gīta

pīyūṣam uttabhita-karṇa-puṭaiḥ pibantyaḥ

śāvāḥ snuta-stana-payaḥ-kavalāḥ sma tasthur

govindam ātmani dṛśāśru-kalāḥ spṛśantyaḥ

TRANSLATION

Using their upraised ears as vessels, the cows are drinking the nectar of the flute-song flowing out of Kṛṣṇa's mouth. The calves, their mouths full of milk from their mothers' moist nipples, stand still as they take Govinda within themselves through their tear-filled eyes and embrace Him within their hearts.

COMMENTARY

A gopī said, "One cannot say that the bewilderment from Kṛṣṇa's flute song is generated from the conjugal desire of ladies only (*gopīs* and *devīs*). Even dumb animals like cows and their calves are affected by the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's flute. In fear of spilling the nectar, the cows have raised their ears like cups to hear the sweet sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute. The cause of the cow's bewilderment is not just their *vātsalya-bhāva* (parental love) towards Kṛṣṇa, because their calves, which are devoid of *vātsalya-bhāva*, are also bewildered."

"The calves, having just drunk their mothers' milk, perk up their ears to drink the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's flute song as soon as they hear it. Then they stop sucking their mother's nipples. The milk falls from their open mouths and they stand as if stunned. The cows stand still as they take Govinda within their hearts through their tear-filled eyes and embrace Him out of *vātsalya-bhāva*, motherly affection. In this way, all living entities have unalloyed pure love for Kṛṣṇa, and are fortunate because they can meet Kṛṣṇa. Only we are unfortunate because of separation from Him."

|| 10.21.14 ||

prāyo batāmba vihagā munayo vane 'smin
kṛṣṇekṣitaṁ tad-uditaṁ kala-veṇu-gītam

āruhya ye druma-bhujān rucira-pravālān

śṛṇvanti mīlita-dṛśo vigatānya-vācaḥ

TRANSLATION

O mother, in this forest all the birds have risen onto the beautiful branches of the trees to see Kṛṣṇa. With closed eyes they are simply listening in silence to the sweet vibrations of His flute, and they are not attracted by any other sound. Surely these birds are on the same level as great sages.

COMMENTARY

One gopī replied, "The calves, who are dumb animals in material consciousness, are only tasting material pleasures. On the other hand, the *ātmā-rāma munis* fixed in transcendental knowledge and renunciation cannot be disturbed by Kṛṣṇa."

Another gopī said, "No, this is not true. Kṛṣṇa also attracts the *munis* with His sweetness. Oh, (*bata*) it is surprising, mother (*amba*)!" (*Amba*, mother, is an address to an intimate girlfriend used naturally by young ladies caught up in loving affection.)

"All these birds resemble *munis* because they live in the forest, keep their eyes closed, observe silence and remain motionless. Perched on the branches of the trees, they become ecstatic listening to the flute. Thus even great *munis* become maddened by Kṛṣṇa's flute song, which is a completely spiritual vibration."

"Not only that *sakhī*, even the branches of the trees are transformed in ecstasy when struck by the vibration of Kṛṣṇa's flute-song, and begin to sprout new leaves (*rucira-pravālān*) out of ecstasy. The sweet vibrations of His flute (*kala-veṇu-gītam*), which agitates the whole universe, arises from Kṛṣṇa alone (*tat-uditaṁ*), not from Viṣṇu, Brahmā, Śiva or Indra. It is impossible for anyone else to produce such enchanting music. Indra, Brahmā, Śiva and Viṣṇu, being primordial gods, travel throughout the universe and have extensive knowledge of the science of music, and yet even these great personalities have never heard or composed music like that which emanates from Kṛṣṇa's flute."

"Indeed *sakhī*, the birds are so moved by the unique, blissful sound that in their ecstasy they close their eyes and cling to the branches to avoid falling off the trees. Due to being absorbed in the bliss of Kṛṣṇa, they have given up all other talk, even the talk of munis about *brahmāṇanda*."

|| 10.21.15 ||

nadyas tadā tad upadhārya mukunda-gītam

āvarta-lakṣita-manobhava-bhagna-vegāḥ

āliṅgana-sthagitam ūrmi-bhujair murārer

gṛhṇanti pāda-yugalaṁ kamalopahārāḥ

TRANSLATION

When the rivers hear the flute-song of Kṛṣṇa, their minds begin to desire Him, and thus the flow of their currents is broken and their waters are agitated, moving around in whirlpools. Then with the arms of their waves the rivers embrace Murāri's lotus feet and, holding on to them, present offerings of lotus flowers.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa is so enchanting that He bewilders each and every member of the female gender. Carrying this fact to its extreme, the gopīs speak this verse (rivers are female gender).

A gopī said, "All the rivers exhibit whirlpools, indicating that their courses have been interrupted by the disturbance of conjugal attraction for Kṛṣṇa. They stop flowing towards the ocean, their husband, because they have lost all shyness and self-control. As their excess water swells into waves, they embrace the lotus feet of Murari standing motionless on the river bank, and holding on to them present offerings of lotus flowers. Yet the ocean does not harbor any hatred towards those rivers because of their love for Kṛṣṇa, unlike our husbands. Just see how unfortunate we are."

According to the *Amara-kośa* dictionary, the word *kamala* (lotus) can also mean water. Taking this meaning, the sentence can read, "They used their own water (*kamala*) to offer *pādya* (a foot bath) to Kṛṣṇa." The word *kamala* can also mean wealth. "In order to please Kṛṣṇa, they offered all their wealth to Him."

|| 10.21.16 ||

dṛṣṭvātape vraja-paśūn saha rāma-gopaiḥ

sañcārayantam anu veṇum udīrayantam

prema-pravṛddha uditaḥ kusumāvalībhiḥ

sakhyur vyadhāt sva-vapuṣāmbuda ātapatram

TRANSLATION

In the company of Balarāma and the cowherd boys, Lord Kṛṣṇa is continually vibrating His flute as He herds all the animals of Vraja, even under the full heat of the summer sun. Seeing this, the cloud in the sky has expanded himself out of love. He is rising high and constructing out of his own body, with its multitude of flower-like droplets of water, an umbrella for the sake of his friend.

COMMENTARY

The gopīs lament to themselves, "Alas, alas even those who are in the mood of friendship with Kṛṣṇa (*sakhya-bhāva*) have perfected their lives by serving Him. Out of *prema* for his friends Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, the cloud expanded himself to shield Them from the intense heat of the sun. The cloud thinks of himself as Kṛṣṇa's friend because they are so similar: they both remove distress by downpours of nectar (*rasa*); they are both dark blue in color; and both exhibit lightning and thunder (which in Kṛṣṇa's case manifested as His yellow *dhoti* and flute playing). Identifying with the mood of friendship, the cloud made a light umbrella (*ātapatram*) with his body composed of a collection of water drops (*kusuma-āvalībhiḥ*) in order to shield his friend Kṛṣṇa. In this way the cloud gives pleasure to Kṛṣṇa, but we do not get an opportunity to please Him." Therefore, the gopīs idea is, "To hell with us!"

|| 10.21.17 ||

pūrṇāḥ pulindya urugāya-padābja-rāga

śrī-kuṅkumena dayitā-stana-maṇḍitena

tad-darśana-smara-rujas tṛṇa-rūṣitena

limpantya ānana-kuceṣu jahus tad-ādhim

TRANSLATION

The aborigine women of the Vṛndāvana area become disturbed by lust when they see the grass marked with reddish kuṅkuma powder. Endowed with the color of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, this powder originally decorated the breasts of His beloveds, and when the aborigine women smear it on their faces and breasts, they feel fully satisfied and give up all their anxiety.

COMMENTARY

Leaving aside the attraction of the flute, this verse speaks of the lotus feet of Vṛṣabhānunandinī Śrī Rādhā, which have the power, by even the slightest contact, to induce complete attraction for Kṛṣṇa, and to raise one to the seventh level of *prema* called *madana* in *mahābhāva*.

One gopī said, “The Pulinda women have reached perfection but we have not. Therefore, we want to know what kind of austerities they have performed.” This is the hint in the gopīs’ statement about the perfection (*pūrṇa*) of the Pulinda women.

The gopī continued, “Why are they perfect? They smear their faces and breasts with the *kunkuma* that has dyed the feet of Kṛṣṇa (*urugāya padābja rāga*). Where did that *kunkuma* come from? The kuṅkuma came from the breast of the gopī Kṛṣṇa was enjoying with, namely Rādhikā (*dayitā stana maṇḍitena*). Though we desire to praise Rādhikā’s good fortune of having such exalted attraction to Kṛṣṇa, out of shyness we do not specifically mention Her.”

“Though that is indeed the *kuṅkuma* of Rādhā, due to lust the Pulindas did not even show it proper respect. What did they do? Upon seeing the grass smeared with *kuṅkuma*, which had fallen from Kṛṣṇa’s feet after He had enjoyed with Rādhā, the Pulindas became lusty. I can’t imagine what would happen if they see Kṛṣṇa personally.”

“Upon seeing Kṛṣṇa from a distance, the Pulindas developed a great desire to smell the fragrance of Kṛṣṇa’s body, so they smeared the *kuṅkuma* from the grass on their faces. Then, with a desire to relish the enjoyment Kṛṣṇa engaged in, they smeared it on their breasts, thinking that they were being embraced by Kṛṣṇa. By this action the pain (*ādhim*) of their lust was pacified. Indeed that *kuṅkuma* has a special power in it! In all our births we have not received it even once.”

In *Ujjvala Nīlamaṇi*, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī describes *madana* as follows: “The stage of *madana* is exalted as the topmost perfection, and it inspires the full-blown manifestation of all loving sentiments (*bhāvas*). All enjoyments of meeting directly with Kṛṣṇa and all pleasurable conjugal pastimes exist within *madana*. It is the very essence of the *hlādinī-śakti* always present in Śrīmati Rādhārāni.”

This definition should be applied to the present verse. Thus this verse indicates that the gopīs experienced enjoyment through pastimes with Kṛṣṇa. Therefore from verse six of this chapter, it should be understood that the gopīs were embraced by Kṛṣṇa, who suddenly appeared before them, and thus they began speaking in this chapter.

|| 10.21.18 ||

hantāyam adrir abalā hari-dāsa-varyo yad rāma-kṛṣṇa-caraṇa-sparaśa-pramodaḥ

mānaṁ tanoti saha-go-gaṇayos tayor yat pānīya-sūyavasa-kandara-kandamūlaiḥ

TRANSLATION

Of all the devotees, this Govardhana Hill is the best! O my friends, this hill supplies Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, along with Their calves, cows and cowherd friends, with all kinds of necessities—water for drinking, very soft grass, caves, fruits, flowers and vegetables. In this way the hill offers respects to the Lord. Being touched by the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, Govardhana Hill appears very jubilant.

COMMENTARY

The gopīs talk among themselves, “Oh sakhīs! Without taking shelter of a great devotee our desires will never be fulfilled. We have heard from Gargi [daughter of Gargamuni] about the glories of Hari’s devotees, and that Govardhana Hill is the best amongst them. Therefore, let’s go there today, bathe in Mānasa Gaṅgā, and take *darśana* of Harideva, the presiding deity of that place. Certainly even our elders will not object to this. Moreover, Kṛṣṇa is playing on the slope of Govardhana.”

Deciding upon this plan, the gopīs glorify Govardhana Hill because it fulfills the desires of Kṛṣṇa, His companions, and hopefully will fulfill their desire to meet Kṛṣṇa as well.

There are three chief Haridāsa’s (devotees of Lord Hari) mentioned in the *Śrītnad Bhāgavatam*: Yudhiṣṭhira, Uddhava and Govardhana. First, Yudhiṣṭhira is described:

> *hari-dāsasya rājarṣe rājasūya-mahodayam*
>
> *naivātṛpyan praśaṁsantaḥ piban martyo ’mṛtaṁ yathā*
>
> “As they all glorified the wonderful Rājasūya-yajña performed by that great saintly King and servant of Lord Hari [Yudhiṣṭhira], they were not satiated, just as an ordinary man is never satiated when drinking nectar.” (SB 10.75.27)

The second, Uddhava is described:

> *sarid-vana-giri-droṇīr vīkṣan kusumitān drumān*
>
> *kṛṣṇaṁ saṁsmārayan reme hari-dāso vrajaukasām*

> "That servant of Lord Hari [Uddhava], seeing the rivers, forests, mountains, valleys and flowering trees of Vraja, enjoyed inspiring the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana by reminding them of Lord Kṛṣṇa. (SB 10.47.56) Of the three servants of Hari, the present verse states that Govardhana is the best, *hari-dāsa-varyo*."

From the touch of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet the rocks of Govardhana become as soft as mud in order to preserve the unique marks on Kṛṣṇa's feet such as the goad, flag and thunderbolt. Contacting Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet causes Govardhana to display symptoms of ecstasy such as perspiration in the form of melting stones, hair standing on end as erect blades of grass, and tears of love as gushing waterfalls.

This verse describes the sweet opulences of Govardhana Hill. *Pānīya* refers to the fragrant, cool water gushing from Govardhana's water-falls, which Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma drink and use to wash Their feet and mouths. Govardhana also offers tasty beverages, such as honey, mango juice and *pīlu* juice. *Sūyavasa* refers to *dūrvā* grass, used in making ritualistic hand wash, *arghya*. The word *sūyavasa* also refers to Govardhana's soft and succulent grasses which nourish the cows and thereby increase milk production. Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma and the boys play, sit and lie down in Govardhana's many caves (*kandara*), which give pleasure when the weather is too hot or cold, or when it rains. Govardhana also offers soft edible roots, jewels to decorate the body, flat rocks for sitting, and mirrors in the form of smooth stones.

Externally the phrase *rāma-gopaīḥ* means Balarāma. The gopīs use this phrase to hide their feelings for Kṛṣṇa. However, for the gopīs, *rāma* refers to Kṛṣṇa who is *rāmanīyā*, charming and attractive, and *ramaṇam*, the source of intimate enjoyment. By the touch of Kṛṣṇa's feet such joy springs up in their hearts.

|| 10.21.19 ||

gā gopakair anu-vanaṁ nayator udāra

veṇu-svanaiḥ kala-padais tanu-bhṛtsu sakhyaḥ

aspandanaṁ gati-matāṁ pulakas taruṇāṁ

niryoga-pāśa-kṛta-lakṣaṇayor vicitram

TRANSLATION

My dear friends, as Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma pass through the forest with Their cowherd friends, leading Their cows, They carry ropes to bind the cows' rear legs at the time of milking. When Lord Kṛṣṇa plays on His flute, the sweet music

causes the moving living entities to become stunned and the nonmoving trees to tremble with ecstasy. These things are certainly very wonderful.

COMMENTARY

"Furthermore, we should not delay in going to meet this flute player. Since He is following the cows, He may soon wander off to a distant forest (*anu-vanaṁ*)." With this idea the gopīs speak this verse.

To indicate that the cowherd boys were in the mood of serving Kṛṣṇa, the syllable *ka* is added to the word *gopakair* (cowherd boys). Thus the word *gopakair* indicates that the boys were protecting (*gopayantī*) Kṛṣṇa with love. Another indication of the word is that every morning they went with Kṛṣṇa. Mother Yaśodā brought them together for this purpose. While Kṛṣṇa played the flute they wandered from forest to forest herding the cows. This produced a very wonderful scene. What was so wonderful? When the moving living entities (*gati-matām*) heard that flute sound, they became motionless (*aspandanaṁ*). The nonmoving trees adopted the qualities of humans and trembled in ecstasy.

Niryoga-pāśa is a type of noose used to restrain calves at milking time. That rope (*niryoga-pāśa*), which had clusters of flowers and pearls at both ends, signified Them as cowherd boys. Sometimes Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma would tie that rope on Their yellow silk turbans as stylish ornaments (*kṛta-lakṣaṇayoḥ*).

|| 10.21.20 ||

evaṁ-vidhā bhagavato yā vṛndāvana-cāriṇaḥ

varṇayantyo mitho gopyaḥ krīḍās tan-mayatāṁ yayuḥ

TRANSLATION

Thus narrating to one another the playful pastimes of the Supreme Personality of Godhead as He wandered about in the Vṛndāvana forest, the gopīs became fully absorbed in thoughts of Him.

COMMENTARY

Śukadeva Gosvāmī summarizes the chapter in this verse. The gopīs attained the platform of being filled with Kṛṣṇa (*tan-mayatāṁ*) by describing Kṛṣṇa's flute playing, forest rambling and cow herding pastimes. The word *mithaḥ* (with one another) refers *mithah rahasi*, meeting one another in a secluded place. Thus, following after their boyfriend, the gopīs met their beloved Kṛṣṇa in a private place and actually engaged in different intimate pastimes with Kṛṣṇa. Then afterwards, the gopīs attained a state of *tan-mayatāṁ*, absorption in ecstatic meditation upon Kṛṣṇa's pastimes and enchantment in transcendental ecstasy.

Because the gopīs say later in *Bhāgavatam* (10.29.36), "O lotus eyed one, from the time we touched Your feet with our hands, we could no longer live with our husbands," it is reasonable to say on this day the gopīs enjoyed with Kṛṣṇa.

Thus ends the commentary on the Twenty-first Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Twenty-two

Kṛṣṇa Steals the Garments of the Unmarried Gopīs

|| 10.22.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

hemante prathame māsi nanda-vraja-kamārikāḥ

cerur haviṣyaṁ bhuñjānāḥ kātyāyany-arcana-vratam

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: During the first month of the winter season, the young unmarried girls of Gokula observed the vow of worshiping goddess Kātyāyanī. For the entire month they ate only unspiced khichrī.

COMMENTARY

This chapter describes the virgin *gopīs*' (*vraja-kumārikā*) worship of goddess Kātyāyanī to attain Kṛṣṇa as their husband, Kṛṣṇa's stealing their clothing, Kṛṣṇa's conversation with them and fulfilling their desires, and Kṛṣṇa's praising the trees.

After describing the *pūrva-rāga* of the married *gopīs* such as Rādhikā toward Kṛṣṇa in the autumn (Śārada) season, there is a description of the *pūrva-rāga* of the unmarried

nitya-siddha gopīs such as Dhanya in connection with the Hemanta season. [*Pūrva-rāga* is intense loving attachment before meeting the beloved] Although in fact their loving affection for Kṛṣṇa as an intimate associate was already established, still the *kanyā kumāris* (virgin *gopīs*), following the ways of ordinary society, performed worship of Kātyāyanī-devī to attain Kṛṣṇa as their husband.

The distinction between these *kumāri-gopīs* performing a *vrata* in the month of Mārgaśīrṣa, and those like Rādhā is made in the *Hari-vaṁśa*, *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* and *Brahmā Purāṇa* in such verses as the following: "The young, unmarried *gopīs* gathered together while it was still dark," (*yuvatir gopakanyas ca ratrau sankalya kalavit*).

|| 10.22.2-3 ||

āplutyāmbhasi kālindyā jalānte codite 'ruṇe

kṛtvā pratikṛtiṁ devīm ānarcur nṛpa saikatīm

gandhair mālyaiḥ surabhibhir balibhir dhūpa-dīpakaiḥ

uccāvacaiś copahāraiḥ pravāla-phala-taṇḍulaiḥ

TRANSLATION

My dear King, after they had bathed in the water of the Yamunā just as the sun was rising, the gopīs made an earthen deity of goddess Durgā on the riverbank. Then they worshiped her with such aromatic substances as sandalwood pulp, along with other items both opulent and simple, including lamps, fruits, betel nuts, newly grown leaves, and fragrant garlands and incense.

COMMENTARY

The word *balibhir* indicates offerings of cloth, ornaments and food.

|| 10.22.4 ||

kātyāyani mahā-māye mahā-yoginy adhīśvari

nanda-gopa-sutaṁ devi patiṁ me kuru te namaḥ

iti mantraṁ japantyas tāḥ pūjāṁ cakruḥ kamārikāḥ

TRANSLATION

Each of the young unmarried girls performed her worship while chanting the following mantra. "O goddess Kātyāyanī, O great potency of the Lord, O possessor of great mystic power and mighty controller of all, please make the son of Nanda Mahārāja my husband. I offer my obeisances unto you."

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs* prayed, "Oh Kātyāyanī! Please make the son of Nanda Mahārāja my husband."

But goddess Kātyāyanī may object, "When you say please do it, what does that have to do with me? You should be allowed to do whatever you wish in this matter. I, on the other hand, shall simply inspire your parents to do the needful in this matter. Therefore, you should rather use the words, 'Please cause someone to do it, or please give this.'"

Anticipating this objection, the *gopīs* say in anxiety, "O great *yoginī*! My connection with Kṛṣṇa should be immediately arranged by you, without the unnecessary disturbance of my parents. I am too anxious for this and cannot wait.

Besides Kṛṣṇa has not taken *brahminical* initiation yet so He is not ready for marriage. Therefore, Goddess, overlook the proper rituals of marriage, and in the Gandharva style let us marry Kṛṣṇa immediately." Such is the implication. [Gandharva marriage is a love marriage by personal agreement without parental sanction]

Kātyāyanī may object, "You are thinking of Kṛṣṇa as your husband and are anxious to have intimate connection with Him even without your parents' knowing. But how can I possibly fulfill this desire of yours?"

The *gopī* replies, "Oh *adhīśvarī*! You have all powers; therefore nothing is impossible for you. You are Mahā-māyā, the supreme enchantress! Therefore, by the power of illusion you should bewilder my parents, so they will not know of my marriage and the secret of my intimate association with Kṛṣṇa."

Taking the word devi to mean *dīvyati* (play), it refers to Kṛṣṇa who plays and causes one to play (*devyati*). Therefore, the *gopī* says, "*Devi* means Kṛṣṇa is indeed the husband, so please make Him so. Such a status of being a husband can be affected without marriage, and thus there is no harm even if I am married to some other cowherd man." In this way each of the *gopīs* separately meditates on the meaning of the *mantra* chanted to petition goddess Kātyāyanī.

In *Ānanda Vṛndāvana Campū*, the *gopīs* pray, “O worshipable Devī! Please accept this foot wash (*pādya*), and cool off our burning breasts with the water from Kṛṣṇa’s feet. We worship you with this *arghya*, so please give us the association of Kṛṣṇa, who is *mahārgha*, most worshipable.”

The goddess Durgā mentioned in this verse is not the illusory energy of Kṛṣṇa called Mahā-māyā but rather the internal potency (*cit-śakti*) of the Lord known as Yoga-māyā. The distinction between the internal and external potency of the Lord is described in the *Nārada-pañcarātra*, in the conversation between Śruti and Vidyā:

“Mahāviṣṇu’s inferior potency, known as Durgā, is dedicated to His loving service. Being the Lord’s potency, this inferior energy is nondifferent from Him (*mahā-viṣṇu-svarūpiṇī*). There is another, superior potency, whose form is on the same spiritual level as that of God Himself. Simply by scientifically understanding this supreme potency, one can immediately achieve the Supreme Soul of all souls, who is the Lord of all lords. There is no other process to achieve Him.”

“That supreme potency of the Lord is known as Gokuleśvarī, the goddess of Gokula. Her nature is to be completely absorbed in love of God (*prema-sarvasva*), and through Her one can easily obtain the primeval God, the Lord of all that be. This internal potency of the Lord has a covering potency (*āvārika-śakti*) known as Mahā-māyā, who rules the material world. In fact she bewilders the entire universe, and thus everyone within the universe falsely identifies himself with the material body.”

We can thus understand that the internal and external potencies of the Supreme Lord are personified as Yoga-māyā and Mahā-māyā, respectively. The name Durgā is sometimes used to refer to the internal, superior potency, as stated in the Pañcarātra:

“In all *mantra*s used to worship Kṛṣṇa, the presiding deity is the spiritual Durgā.” Thus in the transcendental sound vibrations glorifying and worshiping the Absolute Truth, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the presiding deity of the particular *mantra* or hymn is called Durgā. To confuse the Yoga-māyā Durgā with the Mahā-māyā Durgā is a mistake.

Furthermore, although the pastimes of Vraja are on the platform of pure transcendence (*suddha-sattva*), they somewhat resemble material pastimes in appearance. Therefore, there is no fault in the *gopīs*’ worship of Durgā or Mahā-māyā. Independent thinkers who think that the name of Durgā and Mahā-māyā refer exclusively to the external potency of the Lord have no chance of getting even a touch of the breeze carrying the scent of *prema* on their body. This is from *Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī*.

|| 10.22.5 ||

evaṁ māsaṁ vrataṁ ceruḥ kumāryaḥ kṛṣṇa-cetasaḥ

bhadrakālīṁ samānarcur bhūyān nanda-sutaḥ patiḥ

TRANSLATION

Thus for an entire month the girls carried out their vow and properly worshiped the goddess Bhadrakālī, fully absorbing their minds in Kṛṣṇa and meditating upon the following thought: "May the son of King Nanda become my husband."

COMMENTARY

They worshiped Bhadrakālī with the vow, "May the son of Nanda be my husband."

|| 10.22.6 ||

ūṣasy utthāya gotraiḥ svair anyonyābaddha-bāhavaḥ

kṛṣṇam uccair jagur yāntyaḥ kālindyāṁ snātum anvaham

TRANSLATION

Each day they rose at dawn. Calling out to one another by name, they all held hands and loudly sang the glories of Kṛṣṇa while going to the Kālindī to take their bath.

COMMENTARY

This verse continues the second verse's description of the *gopīs* going to the Yamunā for bathing. They called each other by name (*svaiḥ gotraiḥ*): "O Dhanya, Where are you? Why are you late?"

|| 10.22.7 ||

nadyāḥ kadācid āgatya tīre nikṣipya pūrva-vat

vāsāṁsi kṛṣṇaṁ gāyantyo vijahruḥ salile mudā

TRANSLATION

One day they came to the riverbank and, putting aside their clothing as they had done before, happily played in the water while singing the glories of Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

Kadācit (once) here means on the full moon day when the *gopīs* had completed their one month vow. This was mentioned in the fifth verse. To celebrate the successful completion of their vow, the *vraja-kumārīs* invited Vṛṣabhānunandinī, who was the special object of their affection, along with other main *gopīs* and brought them all to the river to bathe. Their playing in the Yamunā was meant to serve as the *avabhṛtha-snāna*, the ceremonial bath taken immediately upon the completion of a Vedic sacrifice.

|| 10.22.8 ||

bhagavāṁs tad abhipretya kṛṣno yogeśvareśvaraḥ

vayasyair āvṛtas tatra gatas tat-karma-siddhaye

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead and master of all masters of mystic yoga, was aware of what the gopīs were doing, and thus He went there surrounded by His young companions to award the gopīs the perfection of their endeavor.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa is the master of all masters of mystic power. Thus being omniscient, Kṛṣṇa easily understood the desires of the *gopīs*, and He would fulfill them. The *gopīs*, like all young girls from respectable families, considered the embarrassment of appearing naked before a young boy to be worse than death. Yet Śrī Kṛṣṇa made them come out of the Yamunā and bow down to Him.

Although the *gopīs*' bodies were fully developed, and although Kṛṣṇa met them in a secluded place and brought them fully under His control, because Kṛṣṇa is completely transcendental there was not a trace of material desire in His mind. As the ocean of transcendental bliss, Śrī Kṛṣṇa wanted to share His bliss with the *gopīs* on the spiritual platform, completely free of mundane lust. This is the import of the word *yogeśvareśvara*.

According to *śāstric* references the word *vayasyaiḥ* (young companions) means mere toddlers two or three years old. These young boys were completely naked and were unaware of the difference between male and female. When Kṛṣṇa went out to herd the

cows, they followed Him because they were so attached to Kṛṣṇa that they could not bear to be without Him.

The *Krama-dīpikā* says: Kṛṣṇa was surrounded by babies who spoke in broken language, who wore tiger nails around their necks and tinkling bells around their waists, and who had fat thighs. The *Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī*, quoting from *Gautamiya-tantra*, lists the names of the boys as Dama, Sudāmā, Vasudāma, and Kinkini. They were the very personification of Kṛṣṇa's heart.

|| 10.22.9 ||

tāsāṁ vāsāṁsy upādāya nīpam āruhya satvaraḥ

hasadbhiḥ prahasan bālaiḥ parihāsam uvāca ha

TRANSLATION

Taking the girls' garments, He quickly climbed to the top of a kadamba tree. Then, as He laughed loudly and His companions also laughed, He addressed the girls jokingly.

COMMENTARY

The small boys laughed for no reason. By laughing loudly (*prahasan*) Kṛṣṇa called attention to Himself and then joked with the *vraja-kumārīs*.

Kṛṣṇa said, "O young girls of Vraja! Do you know who has put all these clothes on the branch of the *kadamba* tree? While herding the cows I saw them from far away and thought, 'Today the *kadamba* tree is very attractive with colorful flowers and fruits.' To see this astonishing spectacle I came running here and climbed this tree."

The young girls replied, "They are our clothes."

Kṛṣṇa: "That cannot be. If they were yours, how did they get on this branch high in the tree?"

Gopīs: "You have stolen them and put them there."

Kṛṣṇa: “Are you blaming Me? I am the son of King Nanda. Am I a thief? If you doubt Me, then just go to Mathurā and complain to King Kaṁsa.”

Gopīs: “Don’t get angry. Just look closely at the clothing and see if they are women’s or men’s clothing.”

Kṛṣṇa: “According to My understanding, they must be women’s clothing because they are so colorful. But so what? You are not the only women in this universe. Could these not be the clothes of some other women?”

Gopīs: “That’s true, but who else besides us can come to this secluded forest?”

Kṛṣṇa: “O girls who like to wander in lonely places! Are you the only women that wander in lonely places and play privately?”

Gopīs: “O fool, we did not come here to play. We came to worship Durgā, the deity of this *kadamba* tree.”

Kṛṣṇa: “Are you the only young women worshipping Durgā? Are there no others?”

Gopīs: “There are no others!”

Kṛṣṇa: “O foolish ones! Every night the demigoddesses come here on celestial vehicles to worship of Durgā.”

Gopīs: “Even if they did perform worship here, why would they leave their clothing here and go away?”

Kṛṣṇa: “Oh young girls, you do not know anything. Tonight they will come again and perform worship. After bathing they will don these clothes. That is why they left them here.”

Gopīs: “You do not know the truth. Today we will perform worship. The deity of the forest has placed those clothes high up in the tree for us to wear after bathing.”

|| 10.22.10 ||

atrāgatyābalāḥ kāmaṁ svaṁ svaṁ vāsaḥ pragṛhyatām

satyaṁ bravāṇi no narma yad yūyaṁ vrata-karśitāḥ

TRANSLATION

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] My dear girls, you may each come here as you wish and take back your garments. I’m telling you the truth and am not joking with you, since I see you’re fatigued from executing austere vows.

COMMENTARY

This verse illustrates how Kṛṣṇa joked with the girls. Kṛṣṇa said, “If these clothes are really yours, then come here if you like and identify them. You can take them after paying Me one small necklace each in order to satisfy Me after you have insulted Me. Each one of you should come individually, not all at once or two or three together, because out of greed for the cloth one woman will take more than one cloth.”

Gopīs: “We cannot go there.”

Kṛṣṇa: (Laughing) “O girls (*abalā*, weak ones)! You have become weak due to your intense austerities and therefore cannot come here.” Another implication of the word *abalā* is, “If you don’t do this, I will not give the clothing because I am strong (*bala*). What can you weak women do?”

Gopīs: “We do not trust Your crafty words.”

Kṛṣṇa: “I am telling you the truth (*satyaṁ*).” Or Kṛṣṇa said, “I am making a vow to you.” According to the *Amara-kośa* dictionary the word *satyam* can mean truth or vow.

Kṛṣṇa: “I am not joking (*no narma*). I see that you are exhausted from the difficulties of your vows (*vrata-karśitā*). Because of your austerities, I am upholding the principles of religion by showing mercy and devotion to you.”

|| 10.22.11 ||

na mayodita-pūrvaṁ vā anṛtaṁ tad ime viduḥ

ekaikaśaḥ pratīcchadhvaṁ sahaiveti su-madhyamāḥ

TRANSLATION

I have never before spoken a lie, and these boys know it. Therefore, O slender-waisted girls, please come forward, either one by one or all together, and pick out your clothes.

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs* replied to Kṛṣṇa, " Because You are a liar, we don't believe Your promise."

Kṛṣṇa bit His tongue while saying, "I have never told any lies. From birth till now, I have not had any occasion to lie. What is the proof? These young boys are the witnesses. They are reliable as witnesses, because they naturally report whatever they see."

Gopīs: "From far away, please throw the clothes to us in the water, or just have the young boys bring them here."

Kṛṣṇa: "I am unable to discern one woman's clothes from another. How then can I throw them to you? Being a very religious person, I do not touch the possessions of others, even with My fingernail. Therefore, you must come here, identify your own clothes and take them. It is My firm rule not to touch, take or give the things of others."

Gopīs: "Because You are so impudent, You can embarrass us. Due to this fear and the fact that we are respectable women, we will not come near You."

Kṛṣṇa: "One of the young girls among you can come forward. If she is not embarrassed and returns to you, then others can come one by one. Or all can come together. It you come as a group it would be impossible to embarrass you. The head is the topmost part of the body, and it is very beautiful. So please show Me your heads. If you can show your

heads, then you should not be embarrassed to show Me your other beautiful limbs, including your beautiful slender waists (*sumadhyamā*)."

|| 10.22.12 ||

tasya tat kṣvelitaṁ dṛṣṭvā gopyaḥ prema-pariplutāḥ

vrīḍitāḥ prekṣya cānyonyaṁ jāta-hāsā na niryayuḥ

TRANSLATION

Seeing how Kṛṣṇa was joking with them, the gopīs became fully immersed in love for Him, and as they glanced at each other they began to laugh and joke among themselves, even in their embarrassment. But still they did not come out of the water.

COMMENTARY

"To make Kṛṣṇa happy, I think we should not be so self conscious." Thinking like this the *gopīs* began to joyfully talk among themselves. Glancing at one another they became embarrassed. The *gopīs* were from most respectable families, and they might have argued with Kṛṣṇa: "Why don't You simply leave our clothes on the bank of the river and go away?"

Kṛṣṇa: "But there are so many of you that some of the girls might take clothes belonging to another."

Gopīs: "We are honest and never steal anything. We never touch another's property."

Kṛṣṇa: "If that's true, then simply come and get your clothes. What is the difficulty?"

When the *gopīs* saw Kṛṣṇa's determination, they were filled with loving ecstasy. Although embarrassed, they were overjoyed to receive such attention from Kṛṣṇa. He was joking with them as if they were His wives or girlfriends, and the *gopīs*' only desire was to achieve such a relationship with Him. At the same time, they were embarrassed to be seen naked by Him. But still they could not help laughing at His joking words and even began to joke among themselves.

One *gopī* said to another, “O lotus-eyed one, Kṛṣṇa is calling you.” The second *gopī* answered, “O beautiful faced one! You go first, and let us see if Kṛṣṇa plays any tricks on you. Then we will go later.” In this way they joked amongst themselves, but remained in the water without moving.

|| 10.22.13 ||

evaṁ bruvati govinde narmaṇākṣipta-cetasaḥ

ā-kaṇṭha-magnāḥ śītode vepamānās tam abruvan

TRANSLATION

As Śrī Govinda spoke to the gopīs in this way, His joking words completely captivated their minds. Submerged up to their necks in the cold water, they began to shiver. Thus they addressed Him as follows.

COMMENTARY

In this way Govinda continued to joke. The word *govinde* here means one who speaks in sweet words (*ga*) such as the following:

Kṛṣṇa: “O dark-eyed girls! If you don’t come here, I will tie all these clothes to a branch of the tree, make a hammock and pillow, and lie down since I am now quite sleepy due to having stayed up all night.”

Gopīs: “O Gopāla! Your cows, being greedy for grass, have gone into a mountain cave. You must go quickly to herd them back on the proper path.”

Kṛṣṇa: “O Gopābalā, cowherd girls! You should quickly leave here and go to Vraja to do your household duties. You should not make your parents and elders suffer.”

Gopīs: “Our dear Kṛṣṇa, we will not go home for an entire month, for it is by the order of our parents and other elders that we are executing this vow of fasting (*upavāsa*), the Kātyāyanī-vrata.

Kṛṣṇa: “My dear austere ladies, I too, by the strength of seeing you, have now developed a surprising mood of detachment from family life. I wish to stay here for a month and execute the vow of dwelling in the clouds (*nabho-vāsa*). If you are merciful to Me, I will come down from the tree and observe the vow of fasting in the water (*jala vāsa vrata*) along with you.”

The *gopīs* were completely captivated by Kṛṣṇa’s joking words, but out of shyness they submerged themselves in the water up to their necks. Trembling from the cold, and also from their anxiety, joy, and eagerness, the *gopīs* addressed Kṛṣṇa as follows.

|| 10.22.14 ||

mānayaṁ bhoḥ kṛthās tvāṁ tu nanda-gopa-sutaṁ priyam

jānīmo ’ṅga vraja-ślāghyaṁ dehi vāsāṁsi vepitāḥ

TRANSLATION

[The gopīs said:] Dear Kṛṣṇa, don’t be unfair! We know that You are the respectable son of Nanda and that You are honored by everyone in Vraja. You are also very dear to us. Please give us back our clothes. We are shivering in the cold water.

COMMENTARY

In this verse the *gopīs* try to satisfy Kṛṣṇa by using one of the four diplomatic principles known as *sāma*, pacification. The *gopīs* said, “You are born in a cultured family so You should not do unworthy activities (*anārya*).”

Kṛṣṇa: “It is obvious that you do not respect Me, for you are not afraid of calling Me bad names.”

Gopīs: “We do not know any other places of Vraja. But we know You, the son of King Nanda.” (The word *gopa* means king as well as cowherd man.) “Furthermore, You are praised and loved by all the Vrajavāsīs.”

Kṛṣṇa: “O foolish women! If I am a king’s son, then what wrong can I do? If you say the king’s son should not do any wrong actions. Then I say, if I am doing wrong, how can I

be praised and loved by everyone in Vraja. It is not possible to praise or love a wrong doer."

Gopīs: "True, we simple women are ignorant of how to speak. Please forgive us, therefore, and give us our clothing. We are shivering with cold." With these words the *vraja-kumārīs* invoke Kṛṣṇa's mercy.

|| 10.22.15 ||

śyāmasundara te dāsyaḥ karavāma tavoditam

dehi vāsāṁsi dharma-jña no ced rājñe bruvāma he

TRANSLATION

O Śyāmasundara, we are Your maidservants and must do whatever You say. But give us back our clothing. You know what the religious principles are, and if You don't give us our clothes we will have to tell the king. Please!

COMMENTARY

In this verse the *gopīs* continue their attempts to pacify (*sāma*) Kṛṣṇa. Taking the word *śyāma* with a dental *s* as *syama* is Citsukha's reading of the word. [Citsukha is an Advaitin commentator on *Bhāgavatam*]. With this meaning the *gopīs* said, "We, being Your maidservants, will carry out Your word." The implication is that 'it is only fitting for us to have an attitude of service to You, who are the king.' The *gopīs* continued, "Moreover because You are very beautiful (*sundara*) we, have to become Your servants, and thus under the guise of being servants, we will offer our very selves to You."

Then the *gopīs* employ the diplomatic principle known *bheda* (process of dividing) by using rough language to weaken Kṛṣṇa. The *gopīs* said, "O knower of religious principles (*dharma-jña*)! You will be acting irreligiously if you steal the wealth of chastity from women and see them naked."

Seeing that it was futile to instill fear of irreligion (*adharma*) in Kṛṣṇa, the *gopīs* then resorted to threats to instill fear: "If you do not give our clothing, we will complain to the king (Nanda or Kaṁsa.)"

|| 10.22.16 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

bhavatyo yadi me dāsyo mayoktaṁ vā kariṣyatha

atrāgatya sva-vāsāṁsi pratīcchata śuci-smitāḥ

no cen nāhaṁ pradāsye kiṁ kruddho rājā kariṣyati

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: If you girls are actually My maidservants, and if you will really do what I say, then come here with your innocent smiles and let each girl pick out her clothes. If you don't do what I say, I won't give them back to you. And even if the king becomes angry, what can he do?

COMMENTARY

After being defeated by their own words, the *gopīs* stood speechless.

Kṛṣṇa then spoke, "We will now test the truthfulness of your words. If you are really My servants, then you will do whatever I say. Please come forward with a smile and take your clothes. If you are not true to your words and fail this test of *dharma*, then I will not return your clothes."

Śuci-smitāḥ means a smile (*smitāḥ*) expressing conjugal love (*śucī*). Thus the *gopīs*' revealed their true inner feelings toward Kṛṣṇa with their smiles full of conjugal affection.

Kṛṣṇa continued, "As I am stronger, you should use *sāma* instead of *bheda*. If you make the king angry, what can you accomplish?"

|| 10.22.17 ||

tato jalāśayāt sarvā dārikāḥ śīta-vepitāḥ

pāṇibhyāṁ yonim ācchādya protteruḥ śīta-karśitāḥ

TRANSLATION

Then, shivering from the painful cold, all the young girls rose up out of the water, covering their pubic area with their hands.

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs* talked among themselves, "Oh *sakhīs*! We have been defeated by our own words. Now, if we delay any longer some other man may come along, and then we will be sunk in an ocean of shame. Our desire to touch Kṛṣṇa's body has become even stronger, and cannot be put to death even by drowning in the water. Therefore it seems our fate has been written on our foreheads, and we can do nothing to change it. Therefore, yielding to His demands, we must put aside our embarrassment, send our obstinacy to hell and close our eyes. In that darkness we will cover our bodies and rise up from the water." Thus assuring each other that there was no alternative, the *gopīs* rose up out of the water to meet Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.22.18 ||

bhagavān āhatā vīkṣya śuddha -bhāva-prasāditaḥ

skandhe nidhāya vāsāṁsi prītaḥ provāca sa-smitam

TRANSLATION

When the Supreme Lord saw how the gopīs were struck with embarrassment, He was satisfied by their pure loving affection. Putting their clothes on His shoulder, the Lord smiled and spoke to them with affection.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa became very satisfied (*prasāditaḥ*) to see the pure unalloyed love (*śudda-bhāva*) of the *gopīs*, who on His order had given up all shyness, which was worse then death for those respectable girls. Kṛṣṇa put the *gopīs*' clothing on His shoulder out of greed to smell the fragrance of their bodies [lingering on their clothes]. By doing this Kṛṣṇa showed His love for the *gopīs*.

Kṛṣṇa thought: "Out of love for Me these *gopīs* have done something which is very difficult for any woman. But there remains something even more difficult, and I wonder if they can do it? Now let Me test the power of their love."

Kṛṣṇa then smiled affectionately and with great boldness advised the *gopīs*: "Oh *gopīs*, you have said that you are My servants, and that you will follow My words. Now I am

going to test you. If you come out of the water and stand before Me, I will give you your clothing along with My body, mind and soul."

|| 10.22.19 ||

yūyaṁ vivastrā yad apo dhṛta-vratā

vyagāhataitat tad u deva-helanam

baddhvāñjaliṁ mūrdhny apanuttaye 'ṁhasaḥ

kṛtvā namo 'dho-vasanaṁ pragṛhyatām

TRANSLATION

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] You girls bathed naked while executing your vow, and that is certainly an offense against the demigods. To counteract your sin you should offer obeisances while placing your joined palms above your heads. Then you should take back your lower garments.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa: "Oh you have made a great offense. By bathing naked in the water you have definitely (*u*) offended Varuṇa or Nārāyaṇa (*deva*)."

Gopīs: "This is a local custom. Therefore, being very young girls we have made no offense."

Kṛṣṇa: "For those performing vows, bathing naked is certainly an offense to the Lord."

Considering that the fruits of their Kātyāyanī-vrata had become nullified, the *gopīs* became afraid and said, "Oh, we have made such an offense, and now we will not get any results. Since we have failed and have become completely mortified, we should give up our lives."

Seeing that the *gopīs* had performed such severe austerities that their bodies were pale, fatigued and shivering, Kṛṣṇa thought, "Oh, I should be compassionate and prescribe some atonement so that they do not give up their lives."

Therefore Kṛṣṇa said, “O slender-waisted *gopīs*! Don’t be afraid. The *śāstras* proclaim that all women are servants of Nārāyaṇa. Gargamuni has also said that I am similar to Nārāyaṇa in qualities. Therefore I am now your Nārāyaṇa. To nullify your offense to Nārāyaṇa, you should face Me and offer respects to Me. Then you can take back your under garments. Since I am a man I have no business with the undergarments (*adho vasanaṁ antarīya vastraṁ*) of women. But I am going to keep your upper garments and use Myself as shawls.”

When the *gopīs* simply lowered their heads as an obeisance, Kṛṣṇa said, “Oh no, offering respects with just the head is inferior.” When Kṛṣṇa saw them then using one hand, He objected again “This is also inferior.” Thus Kṛṣṇa made the *gopīs* hold both hands together in prayer. When Kṛṣṇa saw them folding their hands, but keeping them below their waists to cover their private parts, He said, “Offer obeisances with your palms joined above your heads.”

|| 10.22.20 ||

ity acyutenābhihitaṁ vrajābalā

matvā vivastrāplavanaṁ vrata-cyutim

tat-pūrti-kāmās tad-aśeṣa-karmaṇāṁ

sākṣāt-kṛtaṁ nemur avadya-mṛg yataḥ

TRANSLATION

Thus the young girls of Vṛndāvana, considering what Lord Acyuta had told them, accepted that they had suffered a falldown from their vow by bathing naked in the river. But they still desired to successfully complete their vow, and since Lord Kṛṣṇa is Himself the ultimate result of all pious activities, they offered their obeisances to Him to cleanse away all their sins.

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs* thought that the results of their *vrata* should not be lost, even if they had to sacrifice their modesty. Therefore, they decided to simply surrender unto Kṛṣṇa. This is explained in this verse. When Kṛṣṇa had pointed out that bathing naked was an offense, the *gopīs* decided that their vow had become useless. Desiring to attain the results of their *vrata*, they offered respects to Kṛṣṇa, who bestows the results of all actions, what to speak of this *vrata*.

The *gopīs* said, “If we satisfy Kṛṣṇa, who is the sum total of all results, then what else remains to be gained?” Someone may argue with the *gopīs* saying, “You may gain the results, but what about the sin incurred? This verse answers the question by saying that Kṛṣṇa is the purifier of all sins (*avadya-mrg*). Thus there can be no fault for those who obtain the mercy of the Lord.

|| 10.22.21 ||

tās tathāvanatā dṛṣṭvā bhagavān devakī-sutaḥ

vāsāṁsi tābhyaḥ prāyacchat karuṇas tena toṣitaḥ

TRANSLATION

Seeing them bow down like that, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the son of Devakī, gave them back their garments, feeling compassionate toward them and satisfied by their act.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa then gave back all their garments, rather than just their undergarments, because He was pleased that they had done as He wished.

|| 10.22.22 ||

dṛḍhaṁ pralabdhās trapayā ca hāpitāḥ prastobhitāḥ krīḍana-vac ca kāritāḥ

vastrāṇi caivāpahṛtāny athāpy amuṁ tā nābhyasūyan priya-saṅga-nirvṛtāḥ

TRANSLATION

Although the gopīs had been thoroughly cheated, deprived of their modesty, ridiculed and made to act just like toy dolls, and although their clothing had been stolen, they did not feel at all inimical toward Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Rather, they were simply joyful to have this opportunity to associate with their beloved.

COMMENTARY

Even though the *gopīs* were treated contemptuously, they still acted favorably toward their beloved by doing what would have been impossible for others to do. And astonishingly the *gopīs* became blissful by this. The *gopīs* had been deceived to the extreme by Kṛṣṇa’s words criticizing their nakedness. After forcing them to give up their

modesty, Kṛṣṇa mocked them, insisting that they come get their clothing. He made the *vraja-kumārīs* dance like puppets (*krīḍana-vat*).

When Kṛṣṇa said, “I am telling the truth. This is not a joke,” the *gopīs* did not find fault in Him. Nor did they criticize Kṛṣṇa when He told them to hold their folded hands above their heads as atonement. Though all this was done to them, the *gopīs* felt blissful because they got to meet their beloved (*priya*). They actually became even more attached to Kṛṣṇa for doing all these things.

The conclusion is that when one is considered dear (*priya*), whatever that dear one does is experienced with pleasure even if it gives pain.

|| 10.22.23 ||

paridhāya sva-vāsāṁsi preṣṭha-saṅgama-saṃjitāḥ

gṛhīta-cittā no celus tasmin lajjāyitekṣaṇāḥ

TRANSLATION

The gopīs were addicted to associating with their beloved Kṛṣṇa, and thus they became captivated by Him. Thus, even after putting their clothes on they did not move. They simply remained where they were, shyly glancing at Him.

COMMENTARY

Just as Kṛṣṇa had stolen their clothes, He had also stolen their minds and their love. This verse describes the *gopīs* as the reservoir of *prema*. The *gopīs* interpreted the whole incident as proof that Kṛṣṇa was also attached to them. Otherwise, why would He have gone to the trouble of playing with them in this way? Kṛṣṇa had overcome their shyness and forced them to come out of the water naked, but now, having dressed properly, they again became shy in His presence. In fact, this incident increased their humbleness before Kṛṣṇa. They did not want Kṛṣṇa to see them staring at Him, but they cautiously took the opportunity to glance at the Lord. There is the suggestion that the bashfulness pervaded their bodies more than even previously.

|| 10.22.24 ||

tāsāṁ vijñāya bhagavān sva-pāda-sparśa-kāmyayā

dhṛta-vratānāṁ saṅkalpam āha dāmodaro ’balāḥ

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord understood the determination of the gopīs in executing their strict vow. The Lord also knew that the girls desired to touch His lotus feet, and thus Lord Dāmodara, Kṛṣṇa, spoke to them as follows.

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs* could have said here: "O Kṛṣṇa! O topmost enjoyer of loving exchanges! We have now obtained the fruit of our vow because You have created this extraordinary fraud. By that You have driven the very life air out of our bodies. Then again by Your mercy we have become fully satisfied. By making us come out of the water You have used various clever devices to insult us in every way.

"Then after draping our garments over Your wonderful shoulders, You gave them back to us along with the jewel of Your own heart, as expressed in Your words. In response to this we can only give You our bashful glances. Therefore, because we are simply foolish girls we cannot discern whether this pleases or offends You. Since You know perfectly well the differences of time, place and person, You should please speak whatever You desire to say. We will immediately go home upon hearing that." Desiring to answer them, the supreme, omniscient Lord then spoke in three verses.

|| 10.22.25 ||

saṅkalpo viditaḥ sādhvyo bhavatīnāṁ mad-arcanam

mayānumoditaḥ so 'sau satyo bhavitum arhati

TRANSLATION

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] O saintly girls, I understand that your real motive in this austerity has been to worship Me. That intent of yours is approved of by Me, and indeed it must come to pass.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, "O chaste women! Though out of modesty you have not mentioned that your real purpose (*saṅkalpa*) in worshiping Me (*mad-arcanam*) was to please Me, I know and I accept it. Because your desire was pure it will be fulfilled. Since I am controlled by *prema*, nothing is impossible for My *premi-bhaktas* to attain."

At this point, the *kṛpa-śakti*, mercy potency, made the Lord's power more evident among the *gopīs*, though the power was still under the control of *prema*, and subject to the pastimes. By this power, Kṛṣṇa understood the *gopīs*' were performing austerities in the worship of Kātyāyanī to attain Him, and thus He gave them the results. Gargamuni had said that Kṛṣṇa was similar to Nārāyaṇa, but now the *gopīs* thought of Kṛṣṇa as Nārāyaṇa.

|| 10.22.26 ||

na mayy āveśita-dhiyāṁ kāmaḥ kāmāya kalpate

bharjitā kvathitā dhānāḥ prāyo bījāya neśate

TRANSLATION

The desire of those who fix their minds on Me does not lead to material desire for sense gratification, just as barleycorns burned by the sun and then cooked can no longer grow into new sprouts.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, "If someone worships Me impurely or improperly, I can make that offering pure because I am full of good qualities. What then to say of your absolutely pure desire and pure love? The desire of one absorbed in Me does not lead to material desire for sense enjoyment. Because the object of love is the topmost spiritual entity, it results in the disappearance of material desire. Just as barleycorns roasted in the fire can never grow new sprouts."

The word *prāya* here means "just as." Another reading of *neśate* is *neśyate*. This is a traditional usage according to Citsukha, the famous impersonalist commentator.

|| 10.22.27 ||

yātābalā vrajaṁ siddhā mayemā raṁsyathā kṣapāḥ

yad uddiśya vratam idaṁ cerur āryārcanaṁ satīḥ

TRANSLATION

Go now, girls, and return to Vraja. Your desire is fulfilled, for in My company you will enjoy the coming nights. After all, this was the purpose of your vow to worship goddess Kātyāyanī, O pure-hearted ones.

COMMENTARY

Bearing in mind that the most auspicious time for a lover's first tryst is the night, Kṛṣṇa speaks like this to the *gopīs*.

Kṛṣṇa said, "O women, although you are perfected (*siddhā*) beings, you have taken the role of *sadhakas* (practicioners) to increase the sweetness of My pastimes on earth. In the near future (*ima kṣapa*) you will enjoy (*raṁsyathā*) with Me, and thus fulfill the purpose (*yat*) for which you under took austerities in worshiping Durgā (*āryā*). O pure women! (*satī*)."

|| 10.22.28 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

ity ādiṣṭā bhagavatā labdha-kāmāḥ kumārikāḥ

dhyāyantyas tat-padāmbhojam kṛcchrān nirviviśur vrajam

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus instructed by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the young girls, their desire now fulfilled, could bring themselves only with great difficulty to return to the village of Vraja, meditating all the while upon His lotus feet.

COMMENTARY

It was very difficult (*kṛcchrāt*) for the *gopīs* to return to Vraja because Kṛṣṇa had already stolen their hearts, eyes and other senses.

|| 10.22.29 ||

atha gopaiḥ parivṛto bhagavān devakī-sutaḥ

vṛndāvanād gato dūraṁ cārayan gāḥ sahāgrajaḥ

TRANSLATION

Some time later Lord Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī, surrounded by His cowherd friends and accompanied by His elder brother, Balarāma, went a good distance away from Vṛndāvana, herding the cows.

COMMENTARY

Keeping in mind the glorious display of mercy that Kṛṣṇa had shown to the young *gopīs*, Śukadeva Gosvāmī now wanted to describe the blessings Kṛṣṇa bestowed upon the wives of some ritualistic *brāhamaṇas*. The word *atha* indicates at some other time, namely summer.

|| 10.22.30 ||

nidaghārkātape tigme chāyābhiḥ svābhir ātmanaḥ

ātapatrāyitān vīkṣya drumān āha vrajaukasaḥ

TRANSLATION

Then the sun's heat became intense, Lord Kṛṣṇa saw that the trees were acting as umbrellas by shading Him, and thus He spoke as follows to His boyfriends.

|| 10.22.31-32 ||

he stoka-kṛṣṇa he aṁśo śrīdāman subalārjuna

viśāla vṛṣabhaujasvin devaprastha varūthapa

paśyataitān mahā-bhāgān parārthaikānta-jīvitān

vāta-varṣātapa-himān sahanto vārayanti naḥ

TRANSLATION

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] O Stoka Kṛṣṇa and Aṁśu, O Śrīdāma, Subala and Arjuna, O Vṛṣabha, Ojasvī, Devaprastha and Varūthapa, just see these greatly fortunate trees, whose lives are completely dedicated to the benefit of others. Even while tolerating the wind, rain, heat and snow, they protect us from these elements.

COMMENTARY

In these verses Kṛṣṇa indicates that even trees who are dedicated to the welfare of others are superior to *brāhmaṇas* who are not. The cowherd boys beginning with Stoka-Kṛṣṇa are situated in the eight directions with the duty of protecting Kṛṣṇa. Devaprastha and Varūthapa, who are Kṛṣṇa's umbrella carrier and cleanser of His path, are situated in front and behind. The eleventh boy, Bhadrasena, is the leader of the cowherd boys. He pays attention to all the details and supervises all the boys, but presently he was

situated at a distance. Kṛṣṇa observed that while tolerating rain and scorching sunshine, the trees would continue to shelter others from rain and heat.

|| 10.22.33 ||

aho eṣāṁ varaṁ janma sarva -prāṇy-upajīvanam

su-janasyeva yeṣāṁ vai vimukhā yānti nārthinaḥ

TRANSLATION

Just see how these trees are maintaining every living entity! Their birth is successful. Their behavior is just like that of great personalities, for anyone who asks anything from a tree never goes away disappointed.

COMMENTARY

The trees were like generous persons (*sujana*) who are intent on serving guests. Whoever approaches them to ask for something (*arthinaḥ*) never goes away disappointed.

|| 10.22.34 ||

patra-puṣpa-phala-cchāyā-mūla-valkala-dārubhiḥ

gandha-niryāsa-bhasmāsthi-tokmaiḥ kāmān vitanvate

TRANSLATION

These trees fulfill one’s desires with their leaves, flowers and fruits, their shade, roots, bark and wood, and also with their fragrance, sap, ashes, pulp and shoots.

COMMENTARY

Niryāsa means sap, *āsthi* means pulp, and *tokmaiḥ* means the young shoots.

|| 10.22.35 ||

etāvaj janma-sāphalyaṁ dehināṁ iha dehiṣu

prāṇair arthair dhiyā vācā śreya-ācaraṇaṁ sadā

TRANSLATION

It is the duty of every living being to perform welfare activities for the benefit of others with his life, wealth, intelligence and words.

COMMENTARY

One should use his life to serve others.

|| 10.22.36 ||

iti pravāla-stabaka-phala-puṣpa-dalotkaraiḥ

tarūṇāṁ namra-śākhānāṁ madhyato yamunāṁ gataḥ

TRANSLATION

Thus moving among the trees, whose branches were bent low by their abundance of twigs, fruits, flowers and leaves, Lord Kṛṣṇa came to the Yamunā River.

COMMENTARY

They passed among the trees with branches bent low from the heavy weight of fruits, flowers and leaves.

|| 10.22.37 ||

tatra gāḥ pāyayitvāpaḥ su-mṛṣṭāḥ śītalāḥ śivāḥ

tato nṛpa svayaṁ gopāḥ kāmaṁ svādu papur jalam

TRANSLATION

The cowherd boys let the cows drink the clear, cool and wholesome water of the Yamunā. O King Parīkṣit, the cowherd boys themselves also drank that sweet water to their full satisfaction.

|| 10.22.38 ||

tasyā upavane kāmaṁ cārayantaḥ paśūn nṛpa

kṛṣṇa-rāmāv upāgamya kṣudh-ārtā idam abravan

TRANSLATION

Then, O King, the cowherd boys began herding the animals in a leisurely way within a small forest along the Yamunā. But soon they became afflicted by hunger and, approaching Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, spoke as follows.

Thus ends the commentary on the Twenty Second Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Twenty-three

The Brāhmaṇas' Wives Blessed

|| 10.23.1 ||

śrī-gopa ūcuḥ

rāma rāma mahā-bāho kṛṣṇa duṣṭa-nibarhaṇa

eṣā vai bādhate kṣun nas tac-chāntiṁ kartum arhathaḥ

TRANSLATION

The cowherd boys said: O Rāma, Rāma, mighty-armed one! O Kṛṣṇa, chastiser of the wicked ! We are being harassed by hunger, and You should do something about it.

COMMENTARY

This chapter describes how the cowherd boys were disrespected when begging food from some *brāhmaṇas* performing a sacrifice, how Kṛṣṇa showed mercy to the *brāhmaṇas*' wives, and how their husbands felt remorse. The cowherd boys said, "The *Vedas* say that hunger is man's worst enemy. If you can destroy our hunger now, then you will be successful in conquering this enemy." This is the boys' logic.

|| 10.23.2 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

iti vijñāpito gopair bhagavān devakī-sutaḥ

bhaktāyā vipra-bhāryāyāḥ prasīdann idam abravīt

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus entreated by the cowherd boys, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the son of Devakī, replied as follows, desiring to please certain of His devotees who were brāhmaṇas' wives.

COMMENTARY

In the phrase *vipra-bhāryāyaḥ* (*brāhmaṇas*' wives) the word for wife (*bhāryāyah*) is in the singular form signifying a class. Kṛṣṇa spoke in order to give mercy (*prasīdann*) to the wives of the *brāhmaṇas*. Some say that the singular form is used to indicate one particular wife who attained the tenth stage of *prema*. Out of compassion, Kṛṣṇa wanted to show her mercy. *Prasīdann* has two meanings: giving mercy and lamenting.

|| 10.23.3 ||

prayāta deva-yajanaṁ brāhmaṇā brahmā-vādinaḥ

satram āṅgirāsaṁ nāma hy āsate svarga-kāmyayā

TRANSLATION

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] Please go to the sacrificial arena where a group of brāhmaṇas, learned in the Vedic injunctions, are now performing the Āṅgirāsa sacrifice to gain promotion to heaven.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa sent the boys to the *brāhmaṇas* to teach them that He does not bestow mercy upon those devoid of *bhakti*, even though they are endowed with austerity, knowledge and religious principles. On the other hand, Kṛṣṇa showed that He does give mercy to those having *bhakti*, like the *brāhmaṇas*' wives, even though they lacked knowledge and austerity.

|| 10.23.4 ||

tatra gatvaudanaṁ gopā yācatāsmad-visarjitāḥ

kīrtayanto bhagavata āryasya mama cābhidhām

TRANSLATION

When you go there, My dear cowherd boys, simply request some food. Declare to them the name of My elder brother, the Supreme Lord Balarāma, and also My name, and explain that you have been sent by Us.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, "You should ask (*yācata*) for rice, calling out Our names. Though those *brāhmaṇas* are supposed to be intelligent, they must be woken from their deep slumber of forgetfulness by calling out Our names. You should call out Baladeva's name first because those materialistic *brāhmaṇas* will think that Balarāma, being a *kṣatriya*, is a worthy recipient of charity, whereas I, being a mere *vaiśya*, am certainly unworthy. Even if they give a little, it is acceptable."

|| 10.23.5 ||

ity ādiṣṭā bhagavatā gatvā yācanta te tathā

kṛtāñjali-puṭā viprān daṇḍa-vat patitā bhuvi

TRANSLATION

Thus instructed by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the cowherd boys went there and submitted their request. They stood before the brāhmaṇas with palms joined in supplication and then fell flat on the ground to offer respect.

COMMENTARY

The cowherd boys approached with folded hands to show their humble attitude. Though they fell on the ground, the cowherd boys appeared more effulgent than the *brāhmaṇas* who were standing upon the land of Vṛndāvana.

|| 10.23.6 ||

he bhūmi-devāḥ śṛṇuta kṛṣṇasyādeśa-kāriṇaḥ

prāptāñ jānīta bhadraṁ vo gopān no rāma-coditān

TRANSLATION

[The cowherd boys said:] O earthly gods, please hear us. We cowherd boys are executing the orders of Kṛṣṇa, and we have been sent here by Balarāma. We wish all good for you. Please acknowledge our arrival.

COMMENTARY

The cowherd boys said, “We are executing the order of Kṛṣṇa, who is mere powerful than Balarāma because He the son of King Nanda. Since we have been sent by Baladeva, we will give Him the first rice that we receive.”

|| 10.23.7 ||

gāś cārayantāv avidūra odanaṁ rāmācyutau vo laṣato bubhukṣitau

tayor dvijā odanam arthinor yadi śraddhā ca vo yacchata dharma-vittamāḥ

TRANSLATION

Lord Rāma and Lord Acyuta are tending Their cows not far from here. They are hungry and want you to give Them some of your food. Therefore, O brāhmaṇas, O best of the knowers of religion, if you have faith please give some food to Them.

COMMENTARY

The cowherd boys said, “Please give us some rice?”

The *brāhmaṇas* replied, “Because Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma are not *brāhmaṇas*, we cannot give you until after the *brāhmaṇas* have eaten.”

The cowherd boys said, “But Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma are hungry. Of course, you know the Vedic injunction, *annasya kṣuditam pātram* (food should be given to those who are hungry).”

Seeing the *brāhmaṇas* unfavorably inclined and not saying anything, they continued: “O *brāhmaṇas*! If you have faith in Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, then give, and if you do not, then say “No” and we will go back. Seeing you remaining silent upon hearing our request to feed Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, the sound of whose names causes the entire universe to melt

with love, we can understand that your being “twice born” (*dvijā*) merely means born from two parents (*dvi*-two, *ja*-born).”

When the *brāhmaṇas* did not respond to the cowherd boys’ initial request, the boys addressed them with a touch of sarcasm: “Of course you know the highest principles of religion (*dharma-vittamāḥ*), so what can we tell you about *dharma* and *adharma*?”

The phrase *dharma-vittamāḥ* (best knowers of *dharma*) can also be taken as *dharma-vi-tamaḥ*, which means the ritualistic *brāhmaṇas* were actually totally ignorant of religious principles.

|| 10.23.8 ||

dīkṣāyāḥ paśu-saṁsthāyāḥ sautrāmaṇyāś ca sattamāḥ

anyatra dīkṣitasyāpi nānnam aśnan hi duṣyati

TRANSLATION

Except during the interval between the initiation of the performer of a sacrifice and the actual sacrifice of the animal, O most pure brāhmaṇas, it is not contaminating for even the initiated to partake of food, at least in sacrifices other than the Sautrāmaṇi.

COMMENTARY

The cowherd boys anticipated the possible objection from the *brāhmaṇas* that they couldn’t give the boys any food because they themselves had not yet eaten, and that a priest initiated to perform a sacrifice should not eat. Therefore the boys humbly informed the *brāhmaṇas* about various technicalities of ritualistic sacrifice.

The cowherd boys said, “This rule applies from the beginning of the sacrifice until the animal is killed. But after that there is no fault in taking food. This applies to all sacrifices other than the Sautrāmaṇī, in which none of the food can be eaten.” It is understood from this verse that the animal was already killed.

|| 10.23.9 ||

iti te bhagavad-yācñāṁ śṛṇvanto ’pi na śuśruvuḥ

kṣudrāśā bhūri-karmāṇo bāliśā vṛddha-māninaḥ

TRANSLATION

The brāhmaṇas heard this supplication from the Supreme Personality of Godhead, yet they refused to pay heed. Indeed, they were full of petty desires and entangled in elaborate rituals. Though presuming themselves advanced in Vedic learning, they were actually inexperienced fools.

COMMENTARY

Though the *brāhmaṇas* were knowledgeable of scripture, why didn't they respect Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma? This verse answers the question. Actually the *brāhmaṇas* did not know scripture; rather they were ignorant in realizing and imparting scripture. Therefore, for two and a half verses [9-11] Śukadeva Gosvāmī ridicules them for being full of petty desires, such as aspiring for the heavenly planets. The *brāhmaṇas* thought themselves advanced in knowledge (*vṛddha-māninaḥ*), but actually they were only advanced in age (*vṛddha*). The word *vṛddha* means wisdom and old age.

|| 10.23.10-11 ||

deśaḥ kālaḥ pṛthag dravyaṁ mantra-tantrartvijo 'gnayaḥ

devatā yajamānaś ca kratur dharmaś ca yan-mayaḥ

taṁ brahma paramaṁ sākṣād bhagavantam adhokṣajam

manuṣya-dṛṣṭyā duṣprajñā martyātmāno na menire

TRANSLATION

Although the ingredients of sacrificial performance—the place, time, particular paraphernalia, mantras, rituals, priests, fires, demigods, performer, offering and the as yet unseen beneficial results—are all simply aspects of His opulences, the brāhmaṇas saw Lord Kṛṣṇa as an ordinary human because of their perverted intelligence. They failed to recognize that He is the Supreme Absolute Truth, the directly manifest Personality of Godhead, whom the material senses cannot ordinarily perceive. Thus bewildered by their false identification with the mortal body, they did not show Him proper respect.

COMMENTARY

When should a person overlook the rules outlined in scriptures for suitability of place, time and person and give his acquired goods to another person? This verse answers the

question. Due to their material vision (*martyātmānaḥ*) the *brāhmaṇas* thought of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Absolute Truth, as an ordinary human. Although Kṛṣṇa cannot be perceived by the material senses (*adhokṣaja*), He can be realized by mercy.

Time, place, the sacrificial offerings such as cooked rice (*pṛthak dravyaṁ*), the rituals (*tantra*), *mantras*, the priests, fires, demigods, sponsors, the sacrifice and religious principles are all simply aspects of Kṛṣṇa's opulence.

|| 10.23.12 ||

na te yad om iti procur na neti ca parantapa

gopā nirāśāḥ pratyetya tathocuḥ kṛṣṇa-rāmayoḥ

TRANSLATION

When the brāhmaṇas failed to reply even with a simple yes or no, O chastiser of the enemy [Parīkṣit], the cowherd boys returned disappointed to Kṛṣṇa and Rāma and reported this to Them.

COMMENTARY

Thinking, "How can we give to the cowherds before we have eaten?" the *brāhmaṇas* did not say "yes". And they did not reject the proposal to give their remnants after the *yajña* by saying "No." Seeing that Parīkṣit Mahārāja was becoming angry on hearing this, Śukadeva Gosvāmī said, "O subduer of enemies (*parantapa*)! If you had been there, even though they were the best of *brāhmaṇas*, you would have punished them like enemies."

|| 10.23.13 ||

tad upākarṇya bhagavān prahasya jagad-īśvaraḥ

vyājahāra punar gopān darśayan laukikīṁ gatim

TRANSLATION

Hearing what had happened, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Lord of the universe, simply laughed. Then He again addressed the cowherd boys, showing them the way men act in this world.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa laughed because it was not proper to show anger towards the ignorant *brāhmaṇas*. Furthermore, Kṛṣṇa wanted to teach that a beggar should not become despondent, because it is nature of begging (*laukikim gatim*) that one is often refused.

|| 10.23.14 ||

māṁ jñāpayata patnībhyaḥ sa-saṅkarṣaṇam āgatam

dāsyanti kāmam annaṁ vaḥ snigdhā mayy uṣitā dhiyā

TRANSLATION

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] Tell the wives of the brāhmaṇas that I have come here with Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa. They will certainly give you all the food you want, for they are most affectionate toward Me and, indeed, with their intelligence reside in Me alone.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “Just tell the wives of the *brāhmaṇas* that Balarāma and I have come. But don’t tell them I am hungry, for if they hear that these devoted ladies will become severely distressed.”

Cowherd boys: “But how will they give us food, if we do not tell them You are hungry?”

Kṛṣṇa: “Seeing that you are hungry, they will give food for Us.”

Cowherd boys: “But their husbands will prevent them.”

Kṛṣṇa: “The *brāhmaṇas*’ wives have great affection for Me. They will not heed their husbands’ prohibitions. Since their minds dwell in Me (*mayi uṣitā dhiyā*), it is only their bodies that are residing in their husbands’ houses.”

|| 10.23.15 ||

gatvātha patnī-śālāyāṁ dṛṣṭvāsīnāḥ sv-alaṅkṛtāḥ

natvā dvija-satīr gopāḥ praśritā idam abruvan

TRANSLATION

The cowherd boys then went to the house where the brāhmaṇas' wives were staying. There the boys saw those chaste ladies sitting, nicely decorated with fine ornaments. Bowing down to the brāhmaṇa ladies, the boys addressed them in all humility.

COMMENTARY

The cowherd boys said, "We have been sent here by Kṛṣṇa (*iṣitā*)."

|| 10.23.16 ||

namo vo vipra-patnībhyo nibodhata vacāṁsi naḥ

ito 'vidūre caratā kṛṣṇeneheṣitā vayam

TRANSLATION

[The cowherd boys said:] Obeisances unto you, O wives of the learned brāhmaṇas. Kindly hear our words. We have been sent here by Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is passing by not far from here.

|| 10.23.17 ||

gāś cārayan sa gopālaiḥ sa-rāmo dūram āgataḥ

bubhukṣitasya tasyānnaṁ sānugasya pradīyatām

TRANSLATION

He has come a long way with the cowherd boys and Lord Balarāma, tending the cows. Now He is hungry, so some food should be given for Him and His companions.

COMMENTARY

Upon hearing the name of Kṛṣṇa, the *brāhmaṇas*' wives fainted in bliss. To revive them, the boys explained why they had come to their houses, beginning in a gentle way and ending boldly.

The boys said, "Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma have come a long way (dūram)." Seeing the wives becoming very attentive upon hearing this, the boys decided to inspire them further by mentioning that Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma wanted some food. The cowherd boys said, "Kṛṣṇa and His friends are suffering from hunger."

|| 10.23.18 ||

śrutvācyutam upāyātaṁ nityaṁ tad-darśanotsukāḥ

tat-kathākṣipta-manaso babhūvur jāta-sambhramāḥ

TRANSLATION

The wives of the brāhmaṇas were always eager to see Kṛṣṇa, for their minds had been enchanted by descriptions of Him. Thus as soon as they heard that He had come, they became very excited.

COMMENTARY

The wives began criticizing their minds on hearing that Kṛṣṇa was hungry: "O you low mind! Although you have heard that your beloved Kṛṣṇa is suffering from hunger, why did you not wake up from fainting?"

|| 10.23.19 ||

catur-vidhaṁ bahu-guṇam annam ādāya bhājanaiḥ

abhisasruḥ priyaṁ sarvāḥ samudram iva nimnagāḥ

TRANSLATION

Taking along in large vessels the four kinds of foods, full of fine tastes and aromas, all the ladies went forth to meet their beloved, just as rivers flow toward the sea.

COMMENTARY

The four varieties of foods are those that are chewed, sucked, licked and swallowed. The foods were full of rich tastes and aromas (*bahu guṇa*).

|| 10.23.20-21 ||

niṣidhyamānāḥ patibhir bhrātṛbhir bandhubhiḥ sutaiḥ

bhagavaty uttama-śloke dīrgha-śruta -dhṛtāśayāḥ

yamunopavane 'śoka nava-pallava-maṇḍite

vicarantaṁ vṛtaṁ gopaiḥ sāgrajaṁ dadṛśuḥ striyaḥ

TRANSLATION

Although their husbands, brothers, sons and other relatives tried to forbid them from going, their hope of seeing Kṛṣṇa, cultivated by extensive hearing of His transcendental qualities, won out. Along the river Yamunā, within a garden decorated with buds of aśoka trees, they caught sight of Him strolling along in the company of the cowherd boys and His elder brother, Balarāma.

COMMENTARY

Due to conjugal feelings the wives of *brāhmaṇas* went to meet (*abhisasruḥ*) Kṛṣṇa as if He were their paramour. In order to avoid censure for their conduct, Śukadeva Gosvāmī compares them to rivers flowing naturally toward the sea, because they had already heard extensively about Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.23.22 ||

śyāmaṁ hiraṇya-paridhiṁ vanamālya-barha-

dhātu-pravāla-naṭa-veṣam anavratāṁse

vinyasta-hastam itareṇa dhunānam abjaṁ

karṇotpalālaka-kapola-mukhābja-hāsam

TRANSLATION

His complexion was dark blue and His garment golden. Wearing a peacock feather, colored minerals, sprigs of flower buds, and a garland of forest flowers and leaves, He was dressed just like a dramatic dancer. He rested one hand

upon the shoulder of a friend and with the other twirled a lotus. Lilies graced His ears, His hair hung down over His cheeks, and His lotuslike face was smiling.

COMMENTARY

The brāhmaṇas' wives saw Kṛṣṇa dressed in a yellow cloth (*hiraṇya paridhiḥ*). He was decorated with a garland of forest flowers and leaves extending to His feet, a peacock feather in His top knot, *tilaka* and designs of colored clay, fresh leaves tucked in His belt, water lilies over His ears, curls of hair falling over His cheeks, and a beautiful smile on His lotus face. Kṛṣṇa looked like a theatrical artist.

Kṛṣṇa conveyed His intentions by His gestures; resting His left arm on a friend's shoulder and twirling a play lotus (*dhunānam abjaṁ*) in His right hand. By this Kṛṣṇa was telling the ladies, "I have seized within My hand your lotus hearts and am eagerly twirling them about." Or Kṛṣṇa was telling them, "While seeing you, who possess loving sentiment, My lotus heart is twirling out of eagerness. Thus on the pretext of twirling a toy lotus flower, I am revealing to you that My heart is twirling about. This is what you should deduce from how I am acting."

|| 10.23.23 ||

prāyaḥ-śruta-priyatamodaya-karṇa-pūrair

yasmin nimagna-manasas tam athākṣi-randraiḥ

antaḥ praveśya su-ciraṁ parirabhya tāpaṁ

prājñaṁ yathābhimatayo vijahur narendra

TRANSLATION

O ruler of men, for a long time those brāhmaṇa ladies had heard about Kṛṣṇa, their beloved, and His glories had become the constant ornaments of their ears. Indeed, their minds were always absorbed in Him. Through the apertures of their eyes they now forced Him to enter within their hearts, and then they embraced Him within for a long time. In this way they finally gave up the pain of separation from Him, just as sages give up the anxiety of false ego by embracing their innermost consciousness.

COMMENTARY

Their ears had become successful by hearing repeatedly (*prāyaḥ*) about the excellent qualities of their beloved, and thus their minds became absorbed in Kṛṣṇa. They brought Kṛṣṇa through the doors of their eyes, and made Him lie down upon the lotus flower bed of their hearts. Then by embracing Kṛṣṇa for a long time (*su-ciraṁ*), they gave up their distress. By that embrace they fainted in the bliss of union with Kṛṣṇa. In this way, they became relieved of the pain of separation from Him. This resembles the sages who gain freedom from the pains of false ego by embracing their inner consciousness.

|| 10.23.24 ||

tās tathā tyakta-sarvāśāḥ prāptā ātma-didṛkṣayā

vijñāyākhila-dṛg-draṣṭā prāha prahasitānanaḥ

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa, who witnesses the thoughts of all creatures, understood how those ladies had abandoned all worldly hopes and come there simply to see Him. Thus He addressed them as follows with a smile upon His face.

COMMENTARY

Seeing the ladies in such a state (*tāḥ tathā*), standing stunned with the plates of food in their hands, Kṛṣṇa, the witness of everyone's thoughts, (*akhila dṛg draṣṭā*) began laughing and spoke.

|| 10.23.25 ||

svāgataṁ vo mahā-bhāgā āsyatāṁ karavāma kim

yan no didṛkṣayā prāptā upapannam idaṁ hi vaḥ

TRANSLATION

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] Welcome, O most fortunate ladies. Please sit down and make yourselves comfortable. What can I do for you? That you have come here to see Me is most appropriate.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa addressed the wives of the *brāhmaṇas*, who were endowed with the greatest *prema*, in a similar manner that He addressed the *gopīs* who came for the *rāsa* dance.

Kṛṣṇa said, “Your coming is all glorious! And you are very fortunate (*mahābhāgā*). Out of desire to see Me, you have overcome many obstacles to come here. But I cannot repay you in any way, so what can I do for you? I can simply remain your debtor. Please rest here for some time and take My *darśana.*”

|| 10.23.26 ||

nanv addhā mayi kurvanti kuśalāḥ svārtha-darśinaḥ

ahaituky avyavahitāṁ bhaktim ātma-priye yathā

TRANSLATION

Certainly expert personalities, who can see their own true interest, render unmotivated and uninterrupted devotional service directly unto Me, for I am most dear to the soul.

COMMENTARY

Though the wives were full of the highest *prema*, fulfilling their desires now would not nourish the *rasa*. And without nourishing the *rasa* the pastimes would not be as relishable. Though Kṛṣṇa was moved and controlled by their *prema*, suddenly within His mind His *līlā-śakti*, pastime potency, manifested her influence to bring on a mood of *aiśvarya*, (the majestic mood of showing Himself as God) which caused Kṛṣṇa to send them home.

Although Kṛṣṇa’s opulence (*aiśvarya*) does not tend to manifest in the presence of personalities who have pure ecstatic love for Him, still for the purpose of keeping the pastimes perfect, it became manifest to increase the eagerness of their feeling of separation and unalloyed love. Subduing Kṛṣṇa’s *rati*, it brought out His discrimination and thus He spoke in two verses, according to the mood of *aiśvarya*. Kṛṣṇa said, “Not only you have become attached to Me, but other persons as well have developed affection for Me. Who are they? Those who expertly (*kuśalāḥ*) see to their own welfare (*sva-artha darśinaḥ*) serve Me without personal motives (*ahaituki*) or the obstructions (*avyavahitā*) of mental speculation, just as one affectionately serves one’s own body, husband and other things.”

|| 10.23.27 ||

prāṇa-buddhi-manaḥ-svātma dārāpatya-dhanādayaḥ

yat-samparkāt priyā āsaṁs tataḥ ko nv aparaḥ priyaḥ

TRANSLATION

It is only by contact with the self that one's vital breath, intelligence, mind, friends, body, wife, children, wealth and so on are dear. Therefore what object can possibly be more dear than one's own self?

COMMENTARY

To inspire them with intelligence, Kṛṣṇa uses logic to pacify the *brāhmaṇas*' wives. "It is because (*yat*) of contact (*samparkāt*) with the self that one's vital breath, intelligence, mind, friends, body, wife, children and wealth are dear. What can be more dear than the self (*tataḥ*)?"

Another reading of Kṛṣṇa's statement: "But actually I, the Paramātmā, the inner seer, am dearer than one's body, sons, husband and family."

|| 10.23.28 ||

tad yāta deva-yajanaṁ patayo vo dvijātayaḥ

sva-satraṁ pārayiṣyanti yuṣmābhir gṛha-medhinaḥ

TRANSLATION

You should thus return to the sacrificial arena, because your husbands, the learned brāhmaṇas, are householders and need your assistance to finish their respective sacrifices.

COMMENTARY

"Because I am that very Supersoul (Paramātmā), as you have heard from Garga Muni, therefore, I am always embracing your bodies. Therefore, return to the sacrificial arena."

The *brāhmaṇas*' wives replied, "That may be but how can we return there, giving up You, who are directly the Paramātmā standing before us?"

Kṛṣṇa: “Your husbands need your assistance to complete the sacrificial rituals which have been explained by Me in the *Vedas*. Therefore go and perform those activities according to My order, and you will be able to see Me directly there as well.”

|| 10.23.29 ||

śrī-patnya ūcuḥ

maivaṁ vibho ’rhati bhavān gadituṁ nr-śaṁsaṁ

satyaṁ kuruṣva nigamaṁ tava pada-mūlam

prāptā vayaṁ tulasi-dāma padāvasṛṣṭaṁ

keśair nivoḍhum atilaṅghya samasta-bandhūn

TRANSLATION

The wives of the brāhmaṇas replied: O almighty one, please do not speak such cruel words. Rather, You should fulfill Your promise that You always reciprocate with Your devotees in kind. Now that we have attained Your lotus feet, we simply wish to remain here in the forest so we may carry upon our heads the garlands of tulasī leaves You may neglectfully kick away with Your lotus feet. We are ready to give up all material relationships.

COMMENTARY

Here the brāhmaṇas’ wives speak the same line that the *gopīs*, Kṛṣṇa’s *parama premi-bhaktas*, said at the beginning of the *rāsa* dance when Kṛṣṇa told them to go home as well: *maivaṁ vibho ’rhati bhavān gadituṁ nṛ-śaṁsaṁ(Bhag.* 10.29.31)

The *brāhmaṇas*’ wives said, “O all-powerful Lord! You should not speak such cruel words (*nṛ-śaṁsaṁ*). The *Chāndogya Upaniṣqad* (8.15.1) (*nigama*) says: *na sa punar āvartate*, ‘One who enters the spiritual world never returns to the material world of birth and death.’ You should make Your words true, such as *ye yathā māṁ prapadyante, tāṁs tathaiva bhajāmy aham*, “If one surrenders unto Me, I will reward him” (*Bg.* 4.11) and *mām eva ye prapadyante, māyām etāṁ taranti te*, “Those who surrender unto Me can easily cross beyond all difficulties.” (*Bg.* 7.14)

Kṛṣṇa: “You young ladies are members of the aristocratic *brāhmaṇa* community, so how can you surrender at the feet of a mere cowherd boy?”

Wives: “But we have already surrendered by taking the dust of Your lotus feet on our heads. Since we desire to become Your servants, we are obviously not maintaining a false identification as members of the so-called *brāhmaṇa* community. You can easily ascertain this from our words.”

Kṛṣṇa: “I am a cowherd boy, and those who are cowherd girls are suitable to be My maidservants and lovers.”

Wives: “True, let them be so. Let them shine forth if You are embarrassed in front of Your relatives to make *brāhmaṇa* ladies Your maidservants. We certainly don’t want to embarrass You. We will not go to Your village but will rather remain in Vṛndāvana, like presiding deities of the forest. We simply desire to perfect our lives by any contact with You.

“We will be happy to remain at a distance, and simply pick up the *tulasī* leaves that have fallen from Your feet, or which have been crushed by the feet of Your lovers after they have embraced You, or which have fallen under Your flower bed and been mercifully given to us by Your servants. We will bind these *tulasī* leaves in our hair. We do not aspire to become Your intimate girlfriends or maidservants because that position is very difficult to achieve.”

Kṛṣṇa: “But will your family members not object?”

Wives: “If they do, we will reject (*atilaṅghya*) them and immediately come to You.”

|| 10.23.30 ||

gṛhṇanti no na patayaḥ pitarau sutā vā

na bhrātṛ-bandhu-suhṛdaḥ kuta eva cānye

tasmād bhavat-prapadayoḥ patitātmanāṁ no

nānyā bhaved gatir arindama tad vidhehi

TRANSLATION

Our husbands, fathers, sons, brothers, other relatives and friends will no longer take us back, and how could anyone else be willing to give us shelter? Therefore, since we have thrown ourselves at Your lotus feet and have no other destination, please, O chastiser of enemies, grant our desire.

COMMENTARY

The wives of the *brāhmaṇas* said, “From our youth we have heard about the sweetness of Your form and qualities from the flower ladies and betel-nut sellers of Vṛndāvana. Consequently we have fallen in love with You and become indifferent to our household duties. Seeing us deviating, our husbands have become doubtful and no longer deal with us. After this, they will not accept us in the house.” With this in mind they speak this verse.

Sutā refers to their married sons, and *anye* means neighbors. Now the *brāhmaṇas*’ wives were ready to formally reject their families and neighbors. Weeping they touched their heads to Kṛṣṇa’s feet and said with choked voices, “As we have no other shelter, You should do something. Oh killer of enemies (*arindama*)! Please vanquish the obstacles which prevent us from attaining You.”

|| 10.23.31 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

patayo nābhyasūyeran pitṛ-bhrātṛ-sutādayaḥ

lokāś ca vo mayopetā devā apy anumanvate

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Personality of Godhead replied: Rest assured that your husbands will not be inimical toward you, nor will your fathers, brothers, sons, other relatives or the general populace. I will personally advise them of the situation. Indeed, even the demigods will express their approval.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa replied, “Since you have pure love for Me and are dedicated to My happiness, you should not do something which is against My intentions. Do not be stubborn like this, but return home.”

The wives reply, “O topmost of learned personalities! Being women from aristocratic families, even the sun does not touch us. We have disobeyed our husbands, neglecting them as insignificant as blades of grass, and come a long way from our village to be near You, who are famous throughout Vraja as being licentious. If we try to return home, our husbands and others won’t allow us to enter the village, and out of anger they will surely kill us.”

Anticipating this, Kṛṣṇa answers the *brāhmaṇas*' wives in this verse: "There is no use in unfounded fears. Your husbands will not find fault with you, what to speak of others, such as mothers and fathers. Why? Even if you were to intimately associate with Me, which you have not done yet, they will not find fault because they know that I am the Supreme Lord of everyone. Your husbands, seeing the demigods at their sacrifice, will ask them about this matter and they will give their approval. The demigods and all learned men of the past are in agreement that I am the Supreme Lord of all living entities."

|| 10.23.32 ||

na prītaye 'nurāgāya hy aṅga-saṅgo nṛṇām iha

tan mano mayi yuñjānā acirān mām avāpsyatha

TRANSLATION

For you to remain in My bodily association would certainly not please people in this world, nor would it be the best way for you to increase your love for Me. Rather, you should fix your minds on Me, and very soon you will achieve Me.

COMMENTARY

The brāhmaṇas' wives said, "Then will our desire ever be fulfilled, or not?"

Kṛṣṇa said, "Since you are asking this with your tearful sidelong glances, I will reply thus. The people in this world will not appreciate it if you stay with Me. It is also not the best way to increase your love for Me. Longing in separation will create more intense attraction to Me. Therefore (*tat*), absorb your minds in Me, and you will attain Me very soon."

|| 10.23.33 ||

śravaṇād darśanād dhyānān mayi bhāvo 'nukīrtanāt

na tathā sannikarṣeṇa pratiyāta tato gṛhān

TRANSLATION

It is by hearing about Me, seeing My Deity form, meditating upon Me and chanting My names and glories that love for Me develops, not by physical proximity. Therefore please go back to your homes.

|| 10.23.34 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

ity uktā dvija-patnyas tā yajña-vāṭaṁ punar gatāḥ

te cānasūyavas tābhiḥ strībhiḥ satram apārayan

TRANSLATION

Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus instructed, the wives of the brāhmaṇas returned to the place of sacrifice. The brāhmaṇas did not find any fault with their wives, and together with them they finished the sacrifice.

COMMENTARY

The wives of the *brāhmaṇas* obeyed Śrī Kṛṣṇa's order and returned to their husbands, whereas the Vraja-gopīs, although ordered by Kṛṣṇa to go home, remained in the forest to dance with Him through the full-moon night. Both the Vraja-gopīs and the *brāhmaṇas*' wives achieved unalloyed *kṛṣṇa-prema*.

|| 10.23.35 ||

tatraikā vidhṛtā bhartrā bhagavantaṁ yathā-śrutam

hṛḍopaguhya vijahau dehaṁ karmānubandhanam

TRANSLATION

One of the ladies had been forcibly kept back by her husband. When she heard the others describe the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, she embraced Him within her heart and gave up her material body, the basis of bondage to material activity.

COMMENTARY

The lady restrained here by her husband was especially devoted to Kṛṣṇa. She gave up her material body but she did not give up her spiritual body, which was filled with *prema* due to her intense love in separation from Kṛṣṇa. That spiritual body was kept hidden by the Supreme Lord, who manifested Himself to her. In that body, which was purely spiritual and invisible to all, she quickly left that place and went to Kṛṣṇa. After having

given up one's husband and other objects of attachment, is it surprising that someone also gives up the material body to meet Kṛṣṇa?

To show the power of *kṛṣṇa-prema*, Kṛṣṇa's *kṛpā-śakti* (mercy potency) made that one lady, at the time when all the wives went to meet Kṛṣṇa, give up the material body which is the cause of one's bondage to material activity (*karma-ānubandhanam*), and arrange for her to receive her spiritual body, which is one's connection with pure love of God (*prema-anubandha*). Like a touchstone, she (*kṛpā-śakti*) transformed the other wives' material bodies into pure spiritual bodies as well. Thus from that day forward, the *brāhmaṇa* ladies had no more contact with their husbands. In this way, what is impossible for the *krpa-śakti* of Kṛṣṇa? One cannot say whether that one *brāhmaṇa* lady was superior in her *bhakti* to the others or not, since there is no indication given in scripture. But in any case, all of them became perfect by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa as described in the *Bhakti-rasāmrta-sindhu*: *kṛpā-siddhā yajña-patnī-vairocani-sukādayaḥ*, "Those who became perfect by receiving the Lord's mercy, such as the wives of the *brāhmaṇas*, the son of Virocana (Bali Mahārāja) and Śukadeva Gosvāmī."

|| 10.23.36 ||

bhagavān api govindas tenaivānnena gopakān

catur-vidhenāśayitvā svayaṁ ca bubhuje prabhuḥ

TRANSLATION

Govinda, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, fed the cowherd boys with that food of four varieties. Then the all-powerful Lord Himself partook of the preparations.

COMMENTARY

As Kṛṣṇa is *bhagavān*, the possessor of all powers, in front of Him the *brāhmaṇa* lady gave up her material body. Unseen by others she met Govinda in her spiritual body, and then experienced unlimited pleasure (*vindati*) with her transcendental senses (*ga*). That is the significance of the word "*api*" in this verse.

The food (*tena eva annena*) was inadequate to feed all the cowherd boys. But almighty (*prabhuḥ*) Kṛṣṇa caused all of their bellies to be completely filled. The *ka* in *gopakān* indicates Kṛṣṇa's merciful attitude towards the boys. Though Kṛṣṇa had no desire to eat, He also ate to show mercy to the cowherd boys. That is the significance of *svayam ca* (he also). Kṛṣṇa had no desire to eat because He was feeling remorse at having made the *brāhmaṇas*' wives break their vows.

|| 10.23.37 ||

evaṁ līlā-nara-vapur nr-lokam anuśīlayan

reme go-gopa-gopīnāṁ ramāyān rūpa-vāk-kṛtaiḥ

TRANSLATION

Thus the Supreme Lord, appearing like a human being to perform His pastimes, imitated the ways of human society. He enjoyed pleasing His cows, cowherd boyfriends and cowherd girlfriends with His beauty, words and actions.

COMMENTARY

In this way, Kṛṣṇa did not directly enjoy with the wives of the *brāhmaṇas*, but He did enjoy (*reme*) with the wives of the cowherd men. This is the intention of this verse. *Līlā-nara-vapu* means that Kṛṣṇa appeared as a human being to relish His pastimes. It indicates that because of the predominance of the *līlā-śakti* over Kṛṣṇa's other *śaktis* such as the *sayta-sankalpa śakti* (potency to fulfill His desires), the pastime with the *brāhmaṇas*' wives did not culminate in direct enjoyment.

Enjoying Himself with the cows, cowherd men and *gopīs*, Kṛṣṇa overwhelmed them with bliss by His form, words and actions. *Gopīnām* refers to the young *gopīs* rather than the elderly ones with maternal affection because of the time and context of the verse. Implied here is a refutation to the opinion that prior to the *rāsa* dance Kṛṣṇa did not enjoy with the young Vraja-gopīs.

Śukadeva Gosvāmī indicates: "Kṛṣṇa performed many pastimes similar to the *rāsa* dance with the Vraja-gopīs, but these have not been mentioned by me."

|| 10.23.38 ||

athānusmṛtya viprās te anvatapyan kṛtāgasaḥ

yad viśveśvarayor yācñām ahanma nṛ-viḍambayoḥ

TRANSLATION

The brāhmaṇas then came to their senses and began to feel great remorse. They thought, "We have sinned, for we have denied the request of the two Lords of the universe, who deceptively appeared as ordinary human beings."

COMMENTARY

The *brāhmaṇas* remembered Kṛṣṇa constantly, and became repentant due to the auspicious presence of their wives. This verse speaks of their repentance: “We are offenders because (*yat*) we have ignored the request of the Lord of the universe.”

What type of Lord was He? “We were deceived (*nṛ-viḍambayoḥ*) by Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma who requested food from us.”

|| 10.23.39 ||

dṛṣṭvā strīṇāṁ bhagavati kṛṣṇe bhaktim alaukikīm

ātmānaṁ ca tayā hīnam anutaptā vyagarhayan

TRANSLATION

Taking note of their wives’ pure, transcendental devotion for Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and seeing their own lack of devotion, the brāhmaṇas felt most sorrowful and began to condemn themselves.

COMMENTARY

Though the women were their wives, the *brāhmaṇas* now regarded them as their *gurus*, and they criticized themselves for their own lack of devotion. The *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*, pure devotion to Kṛṣṇa, of their wives was impossible to see in ordinary society (*alaukikīm*).

|| 10.23.40 ||

dhig janma nas tri-vṛd yat tad dhig vrataṁ dhig bahu-jñatām

dhik kulaṁ dhik kriyā-dākṣyaṁ vimukhā ye tv adhokṣaje

TRANSLATION

[The brāhmaṇas said:] To hell with our threefold birth, our vow of celibacy and our extensive learning! To hell with our aristocratic background and our expertise in the rituals of sacrifice! These are all condemned because we were inimical to the transcendental Personality of Godhead.

COMMENTARY

The *brāhmaṇas* said, “Our three births: 1) physical birth, 2) *brahminical* initiation, and 3) initiation into the performance of Vedic sacrifice are all useless. Our vow of celibacy

is useless. And our expertise in daily and occasional duties (*nityа* and *naimittika kriya*) is all useless because we were inimical to Śrī Kṛṣṇa (*adhokṣaja*)."

|| 10.23.41 ||

nūnaṁ bhagavato māyā yoginām api mohinī

yad vayaṁ guravo nṛṇāṁ svārthe muhyāmahe dvijāḥ

TRANSLATION

The illusory potency of the Supreme Lord certainly bewilders even the great mystics, what to speak of us. As brāhmaṇas we are supposed to be the spiritual masters of all classes of men, yet we have been bewildered about our own real interest.

COMMENTARY

The *brāhmaṇas* said, "If the *yogis* who practice *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* also become bewildered, what can be said of us, who are involved in so much *karma*? Although we are the spiritual masters (*guravo*) of others, *māyā* has bewildered us about the real goal of our lives."

|| 10.23.42 ||

aho paśyata nārīṇām api kṛṣṇe jagad-gurau

duranta-bhāvaṁ yo 'vidhyan mṛtyu-pāśān gṛhābhidhān

TRANSLATION

Just see the unlimited love these women have developed for Lord Kṛṣṇa, the spiritual master of the entire universe! This love has broken for them the very bonds of death—their attachment to family life.

COMMENTARY

The *brāhmaṇas* said, "As their husbands, fathers or fathers-in-law we are superficially the *gurus* or teachers of these women. But these women have attained perfection in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, whereas we have fallen in the blind well of ignorance." That is expressed in this verse.

The *brāhmaṇas* said, “These women possess a love for Kṛṣṇa which is impossible for us to understand (*duranta bhāvaṁ*). Just see (*paśyata*) the *prema* they are showing towards Kṛṣṇa.”

The syllable *ha* in *aho* (joy, surprise) indicates that upon returning home the ladies displayed ecstatic symptoms, such as trembling, shedding tears, hairs standing on end, and calling out in choked voices, “O pleasure of my life, O Kṛṣṇa!”

The *brāhmaṇas* continued, “But it is not fitting for a woman to love anyone other than her husband. Though women should regard their husbands as *guru*, what can one say when the Supreme Lord, who is *jagad-guru*, the universal teacher and spiritual master appears directly before them? They have developed their love for the *guru* of the universe (Kṛṣṇa), and now don’t have even a trace of attachment for home, husband, children and so forth. As we no longer see those attachments in them, they are our *gurus.*” From that day on the husbands accepted those ladies as their worshipable spiritual masters and no longer thought of them as their wives or property.

|| 10.23.43-44 ||

nāsāṁ dvijāti-saṁskāro na nivāso gurāv api

na tapo nātma-mīmāṁsā na śaucaṁ na kriyāḥ śubhāḥ

tathāpi hy uttamaḥ-śloke kṛṣṇe yogeśvareśvare

bhaktir dṛḍhā na cāsmākaṁ saṁskārādimatām api

TRANSLATION

These women have never undergone the purificatory rites of the twice-born classes, nor have they lived as Brahmācārīs in the āśrama of a spiritual master, nor have they executed austerities, speculated on the nature of the self, followed the formalities of cleanliness or engaged in pious rituals. Nevertheless, they have firm devotion for Lord Kṛṣṇa, whose glories are chanted by the exalted hymns of the Vedas and who is the supreme master of all masters of mystic power. We, on the other hand, have no such devotion for the Lord, although we have executed all these processes.

COMMENTARY

The *brāhmaṇas* said, “We cannot understand how our wives have developed such extraordinary love for Kṛṣṇa.” That is the intention of this verse.

The *brāhmaṇas* continued, “They did not perform *upanayana saṁskāra*, live as *brahmacārīs* in a *guru’s āśrama*, perform austerities, meditate on the soul, or execute auspicious rites. The cause of their love is none other than Kṛṣṇa, the supreme master of all masters of mystic power.”

The cause of their wives’ loving devotion to Kṛṣṇa was hearing about the form, qualities and activities of Kṛṣṇa from the flower ladies and other women of Vraja. But the *brāhmaṇas* did not mention this because they were unaware of it. This is Śukadeva Gosvāmī’s intention here.

|| 10.23.45 ||

nanu svārtha-vimūḍhānāṁ pramattānāṁ gṛhehayā

aho naḥ smārayām āsa gopa-vākyaiḥ satāṁ gatiḥ

TRANSLATION

Indeed, infatuated as we are with our household affairs, we have deviated completely from the real aim of our life. But now just see how the Lord, through the words of these simple cowherd boys, has reminded us of the ultimate destination of all true transcendentalists.

COMMENTARY

“What mercy the Lord shows, and what selfishness we have.” That is what the *brāhmaṇas* express in this verse.

|| 10.23.46 ||

anyathā pūrṇa-kāmasya kaivalyādy-aśiṣāṁ pateḥ

īśitavyaiḥ kim asmābhir īśasyaitad viḍambanam

TRANSLATION

Otherwise, why would the supreme controller—whose every desire is already fulfilled and who is the master of liberation and all other transcendental

benedictions—enact this pretense with us, who are always to be controlled by Him?

COMMENTARY

The *brāhmaṇas* said, “As Kṛṣṇa is self-satisfied and has attained fulfillment in every possible desire, what does He need from us? It cannot be anything else (*anyathā*) but an expression of His causeless mercy. By sending His friends to humbly beg food from us, He exposed our foolish arrogance.”

|| 10.23.47 ||

hitvānyān bhajate yaṁ śrīḥ pāda-sparśāśayāsakṛt

svātma-doṣāpavargeṇa tad-yācñā jana-mohinī

TRANSLATION

Hoping for the touch of His lotus feet, the goddess of fortune perpetually worships Him alone, leaving aside all others and renouncing her pride and fickleness. That He begs is certainly astonishing to everyone.

COMMENTARY

Someone may reply to the *brāhmaṇas*, “Kṛṣṇa begged rice because He was hungry, not to show mercy. And you should not say that He is self-satisfied, because He performs activities like herding cows for some purpose.” This verse refutes these arguments.

The *brāhmaṇas* said, “The goddess of wealth (Laksmī-devī) gives up her natural tendency of fickleness (*sva-atma doṣa apavargeṇa*) to constantly (*asakṛt*) worship Kṛṣṇa. Yet that supreme master of the goddess of wealth still begs for food. People like us are certainly bewildered by such actions, and cannot believe therefore, that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Lord.”

|| 10.23.48-49 ||

deśaḥ kālaḥ pṛthag dravyaṁ mantra-tantrartvijo ’gnayaḥ

devatā yajamānaś ca kratur dharmaś ca yan-mayaḥ

sa eva bhagavān sākṣād viṣṇur yogeśvareśvaraḥ

jāto yaduṣv ity āśṛṇma hy api mūḍhā na vidmahe

TRANSLATION

All the aspects of sacrifice—the auspicious place and time, the various items of paraphernalia, the Vedic hymns, the prescribed rituals, the priests and sacrificial fires, the demigods, the patron of the sacrifice, the sacrificial offering and the pious results obtained—all are simply manifestations of His opulences. Yet even though we had heard that the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Viṣṇu, the Lord of all mystic controllers, had taken birth in the Yadu dynasty, we were so foolish that we could not recognize Śrī Kṛṣṇa to be none other than Him.

COMMENTARY

The *brāhmaṇas*' bewilderment is further explained in these verses.

|| 10.23.50 ||

tasmai namo bhagavate kṛṣṇāyākuṇṭha-medhase

yan-māyā-mohita-dhiyo bhramāmaḥ karma-vartmasu

TRANSLATION

Let us offer our obeisances unto Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. His intelligence is never bewildered, whereas we, confused by His power of illusion, are simply wandering about on the paths of fruitive work.

COMMENTARY

Ashamed about their offense against Kṛṣṇa, the *brāhmaṇas* offered obeisances to the Lord.

|| 10.23.51 ||

sa vai na ādyaḥ puruṣaḥ sva-māyā-mohitātmanām

avijñatānubhāvānāṁ kṣantum arhaty atikramam

TRANSLATION

We were bewildered by Lord Kṛṣṇa's illusory potency and thus could not understand His influence as the original Personality of Godhead. Now we hope He will kindly forgive our offense.

COMMENTARY

The *brāhmaṇas*, feeling very fallen, then asked forgiveness from the Lord.

|| 10.23.52 ||

iti svāgham anusmṛtya kṛṣṇe te kṛta-helanāḥ

didṛkṣavo vrajam atha kaṁsād bhītā na cācalan

TRANSLATION

Thus reflecting on the sin they had committed by neglecting Lord Kṛṣṇa, they became very eager to see Him. But being afraid of King Kaṁsa, they did not dare go to Vraja.

COMMENTARY

After realizing their offense against Kṛṣṇa, and finally appreciating His almighty position, why did the *brāhmaṇas* not just rush to Vraja and surrender at the lotus feet of the Lord? This verse answers. At that moment, the *brāhmaṇas* were bewildered by grief and guilt, and were not in agreement as to the proper course of action. Thus they did not go to the Asoka grove to meet Śrī Kṛṣṇa. And even by the end of the day, although they were all in agreement, they still could not go to Vraja. The word "*ca*" indicates they tried to move but could not. Suddenly at the same time they all felt the presence of Kaṁsa. The *brāhmaṇas* were afraid that Kaṁsa would certainly kill them if his spies reported that they had gone to Kṛṣṇa.

The fear of being killed, however, did not create any obstacle for their wives. Being absorbed in ecstatic Kṛṣṇa consciousness. the *brāhmaṇas*' wives immediately went to Kṛṣṇa, just as the *gopīs*, simply to dance with the Lord, traveled in the dead of night through a forest full of ferocious animals. It should be understood that because the *brāhmaṇas* were not on such an advanced platform of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the shadow of fear in their minds kept them from seeing the Lord face to face.

Thus ends the commentary on the Twenty Third Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Twenty-four

Worshiping Govardhana Hill

|| 10.24.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

bhagavān api tatraiva baladevena saṁyutaḥ

apaśyan nivasan gopān indra-yāga-kṛtodyamān

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: While staying in that very place with His brother Baladeva, Lord Kṛṣṇa happened to see the cowherd men busily arranging for a sacrifice to Indra.

COMMENTARY

In this chapter Kṛṣṇa talks with His father Nanda Mahārāja, stops the sacrifice to Indra, and introduces the worship of Govardhana Hill.

In village of the *yajñic brāhmaṇas*, Nanda Mahārāja and his brothers were somehow or other preparing an elaborate sacrifice to Lord Indra. Upon arriving there and observing the men busy in the preparations, Kṛṣṇa reacted as follows.

|| 10.24.2 ||

tad-abhijño 'pi bhagavān sarvātmā sarva-darśanaḥ

praśrayāvanato 'pṛcchad vṛddhān nanda-purogamān

TRANSLATION

Being the omniscient Supersoul, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa already understood the situation, yet He still humbly inquired from the elders, headed by His father, Nanda Mahārāja.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa knew all about the sacrifice because He had seen it many times before. As Paramātmā (*sarva-ātmā*) He was inspiring the Vrajavāsīs to perform the sacrifice. Yet being eager to enact His pastime of lifting Govardhana Hill, Kṛṣṇa cleverly inquired from His father about the imminent sacrifice. Kṛṣṇa is called *sarva-darśanaḥ* because He could see into the future, wherein He would smash lndra's pride and enjoy pastimes with His loving devotees for seven days.

|| 10.24.3 ||

kathyatāṁ me pitaḥ ko 'yaṁ sambhramo va upāgataḥ

kiṁ phalaṁ kasya voddeśaḥ kena vā sādhyate makhaḥ

TRANSLATION

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] My dear father, kindly explain to Me what this great endeavor of yours is all about. What is it meant to accomplish? If this is a ritual sacrifice, then for whose satisfaction is it intended and by what means is it going to be executed?

|| 10.24.4 ||

etad brūhi mahān kāmo mahyaṁ śuśrūṣave pitaḥ

na hi gopyaṁ hi sadhūnāṁ kṛtyaṁ sarvātmanām iha

asty asva-para-dṛṣṭīnām amitrodāsta-vidviṣām

TRANSLATION

Please tell Me about it, O father. I have a great desire to know and am ready to hear in good faith. Certainly, no secrets are to be kept by saintly personalities, who see all others as equal to themselves, who have no conception of "mine" or "another's" and who do not consider who is a friend, who is an enemy and who is neutral.

COMMENTARY

If Nanda Mahārāja answered, "We are busy preparing for the sacrifice we are about to perform." Then Kṛṣṇa would ask, "What is the purpose of this sacrifice? Who is the demigod to be worshiped through this sacrifice? Who will perform it and with what materials?"

Nanda Mahārāja said, "You are but a mere child. Why are You asking such questions?"

Kṛṣṇa: "I have a great desire (*mahān-kāma*) to know." Or the meaning can be "As You are showing great expectations, therefore please tell Me because I want to hear."

|| 10.24.5 ||

udāsīno 'ri-vad varjya ātma-vat suhṛd ucyate

TRANSLATION

One who is neutral may be avoided like an enemy, but a friend should be considered like one's own self.

COMMENTARY

Anticipating that one of the cowherd men may say, "As this is a private affair, we should not tell a small boy with little intelligence," Kṛṣṇa utters statements that reveal He is very learned.

Kṛṣṇa said, “Those who are of good character see all other people on the same level as themselves. They do not distinguish between friends, enemies and neutral parties. Therefore, you should trust Me and reveal the entire purpose of the sacrifice.”

Nanda Mahārāja: “But we are householders and cannot follow such standards of saintly behavior.”

To answer that objection Kṛṣṇa says, “One who is indifferent may be avoided like an enemy.”

Ujjvala-nīlamaṇī defines the *taṭastha* or neutral person as “a friend of the opposing group.” The neutral person is not an enemy or a friend, and should not be avoided nor accepted. Therefore he is included among those to be avoided.

Kṛṣṇa continues, “But one should have faith in the friend as one’s very own self. I am more than a friend; I am an intimate family member.”

|| 10.24.6 ||

jñatvājñātvā ca karmāṇi jano ’yam anutiṣṭhati

viduṣaḥ karma-siddhiḥ syād yathā nāviduṣo bhavet

TRANSLATION

When people in this world perform activities, sometimes they understand what they are doing and sometimes they don’t. Those who know what they are doing achieve success in their work, whereas ignorant people do not.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “People should perform a particular ceremony or activity only after thoroughly understanding it through discussion with friends. We should not be blind followers of tradition.”

Activities refers to the worship and sacrifices that *vaiśyas* [farmers] should perform, as well the present and future results.

|| 10.24.7 ||

tatra tāvat kriyā-yogo bhavatāṁ kiṁ vicāritaḥ

atha vā laukikas tan me pṛcchataḥ sādhu bhaṇyatām

TRANSLATION

Such being the case, this ritualistic endeavor of yours should be clearly explained to Me. Is it a ceremony based on scriptural injunction, or simply a custom of ordinary society?

COMMENTARY

Anticipating that one of the cowherd men may say, "We are con-ducting this *yajña* after considering very carefully with knowledge," Kṛṣṇa replies here with another question: "Is this fruitive endeavor (*kriyā yoga*) based on scripture, or is it simply a local custom?"

|| 10.24.8 ||

śrī-nanda uvāca

parjanyo bhagavān indro meghās tasyātma-mūrtayaḥ

te 'bhivarṣanti bhūtānāṁ prīṇanaṁ jīvanaṁ payaḥ

TRANSLATION

Nanda Mahārāja replied: The great Lord Indra is the controller of the rain. The clouds are his personal representatives, and they directly provide rainwater, which gives happiness and sustenance to all creatures.

COMMENTARY

In this verse Nanda Mahārāja gives the logic behind the worship. Nanda Mahārāja said, "This is a local custom. Indra sends the rain which is pleasing and gives life to entities such as grass."

|| 10.24.9 ||

taṁ tāta vayam anye ca vārmucāṁ patim īśvaram

dravyais tad-retasā siddhair yajante kratubhir narāḥ

TRANSLATION

Not only we, my dear son, but also many other men worship him, the lord and master of the rain-giving clouds. We offer him grain and other paraphernalia of worship produced through his own discharge in the form of rain.

COMMENTARY

Nanda Mahārāja is affectionately addressing Kṛṣṇa with the word *tāta* (my dear son). The hint is: "Through the mercy of demigods like Indra, I have attained a qualified son like You. Therefore You should not oppose this action. In this sacrifice there should be no false pride. We worship Indra with materials created by Indra's rain, just as one worships the Gaṅgā with Gaṅgā water."

|| 10.24.10 ||

tac-cheṣeṇopajīvanti tri-varga-phala-hetave

puṁsāṁ puruṣa-kārāṇāṁ parjanyaḥ phala-bhāvanaḥ

TRANSLATION

By accepting the remnants of sacrifices performed to Indra, people sustain their lives and accomplish the threefold aims of religiosity, economic development and sense gratification. Thus Lord Indra is the agent responsible for the fruitive success of industrious people.

COMMENTARY

Nanda Mahārāja said, "People sustain their lives by the remnants of sacrifices performed to Indra. Human life is not meant just for sense gratification, but for attaining the goals of *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma*. From rain comes grains, from grains comes sustenance of life, from sustenance of life comes religiosity, and from religiosity comes effort and action. Because the clouds are the root of the *dharma, artha* and *kāma,* we should worship Indra, the Lord of the clouds."

|| 10.24.11 ||

ya enaṁ visṛjed dharmaṁ paramparyāgataṁ naraḥ

kāmād dveṣād bhayāl lobhāt sa vai nāpnoti śobhanam

TRANSLATION

This religious principle is based on sound tradition. Anyone who rejects it out of lust, enmity, fear or greed will certainly fail to achieve good fortune.

COMMENTARY

This verse speaks of the dire result of not worshiping Indra. If one neglects his religious duties out of lust, greed, fear or enmity, he will not attain any benefit now or in the future.

|| 10.24.12 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

vaco niśamya nandasya tathānyeṣāṁ vrajaukasām

indrāya manyuṁ janayan pitaraṁ prāha keśavaḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: When Lord Keśava [Kṛṣṇa] heard the statements of His father, Nanda, and other senior residents of Vraja, He addressed His father as follows, to arouse anger in Lord Indra.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa's aim in provoking Indra's anger was to break the mountain of his false pride. By lifting Govardhana Hill Śrī Kṛṣṇa would thus initiate a blissful annual festival called Govardhana-*pūjā,* and He would further enjoy the pleasant pastime of dwelling for seven days beneath the hill with all His loving devotees. These are the successive reasons for Kṛṣṇa's words.

|| 10.24.13 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

karmaṇā jāyate jantuḥ karmaṇaiva pralīyate

sukhaṁ duḥkhaṁ bhayaṁ kṣemaṁ karmaṇaivābhipadyate

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa said: It is by the force of karma that a living entity takes birth, and it is by karma alone that he meets his destruction. His happiness, distress, fear and sense of security all arise as the effects of karma.

COMMENTARY

In order to show pastimes as a human being Kṛṣṇa spoke the philosophy known as Karma-vāda or Karma-mīmāṁsā to minimize the importance of the demigods. Karma-mīmāṁsā is basically atheism with a belief in reincarnation.

|| 10.24.14 ||

asti ced īśvaraḥ kaścit phala-rūpy anya-karmaṇām

kartāraṁ bhajate so 'pi na hy akartuḥ prabhur hi saḥ

TRANSLATION

Even if there is some supreme controller who awards all others the results of their activities, He must also depend upon a performer's engaging in activity. After all, there is no question of being the bestower of fruitive results unless fruitive activities have actually been performed.

COMMENTARY

"But how can inanimate karma alone give results? There must be a dispenser of the results of action, a lord." This verse answers this objection. "If such a lord exists, he must give results to those who perform actions."

Then Kṛṣṇa makes His logic stronger by negation. "If there is a supreme controller, He must depend on a performer of activity to reciprocate with and must therefore also be subject to the laws of karma, being obliged to award happiness and distress to conditioned souls according to the laws of good and evil."

|| 10.24.15 ||

kim indreṇeha bhūtānāṁ sva-sva-karmānuvartinām

anīśenānyathā kartuṁ svabhāva-vihitaṁ nṛṇām

TRANSLATION

Living beings in this world are forced to experience the consequences of their own particular previous work. Since Lord Indra cannot in any way change the destiny of human beings, which is born of their own nature, why should people worship him?

COMMENTARY

"The demigods have no function at all; they are like the nipples on the neck of a goat." Thus, Kṛṣṇa says that there is no need to worship Indra because people are simply reaping their inevitable karma. There may be an objection, "Action cannot take place unless the Supersoul instigates it. Thus, how can You say that the demigods have no function?"

Kṛṣṇa answers, "The Supersoul inspires the soul to act on the basis of his previous impressions (*saṁskāras*), and for no other purpose. Since one only acts according to his previous deeds, worship of Indra will have no effect."

|| 10.24.16 ||

svabhāva-tantro hi janaḥ svabhāvam anuvartate

svabhāva-stham idaṁ sarvaṁ sa-devāsura-mānuṣam

TRANSLATION

Every individual is under the control of his own conditioned nature, and thus he must follow that nature. This entire universe, with all its demigods, demons and human beings, is based on the conditioned nature of the living entities.

COMMENTARY

Śrī Kṛṣṇa here elaborates upon the argument given in the previous verse. "Since the actions one does in this life depend on his *svabhāva* (conditioned nature), why bother worshiping God or the demigods?"

|| 10.24.17 ||

dehān uccāvacāñ jantuḥ prāpyotsṛjati karmaṇā

śatrur mitram udāsīnaḥ karmaiva gurur īśvaraḥ

TRANSLATION

Because it is karma that causes the conditioned living entity to accept and then give up different high-and low-grade material bodies, this karma is his enemy, friend and neutral witness, his spiritual master and controlling lord.

COMMENTARY

"It is our action (*karma*), which is based on previous impressions, which gives all results. Therefore it is worshipable." That is the intention of this and half the next verse.

|| 10.24.18 ||

tasmāt sampūjayet karma svabhāva-sthaḥ sva-karma-kṛt

aṇjasā yena varteta tad evāsya hi daivatam

TRANSLATION

Therefore one should seriously worship work itself. A person should remain in the position corresponding to his nature and should perform his own duty. Indeed, that by which we may live nicely is really our worshipable deity.

COMMENTARY

Śrī Kṛṣṇa here proposes that our work (*karma*) or occupation is really God and that we should therefore simply worship (*sampūjayet*) our work. Though karma in general should be respected, karma as the cause is also proved through scripture. Those situated in their social position (*varṇa*) such as brāhmaṇas, perform actions according to that varṇa (*svakarmakam*).

Nanda Mahārāja said, "But how can there be success of a sacrifice where the ingredients are offered to the demigods without accepting the demigods?"

Kṛṣṇa: "The demigods are only *karmaṅga*, secondary assistants to the *karma* itself, according to the philosophy of *hetutvad* (causality). In this way the demigods are reconciled. *Karma*, the work by which we live happily, is our deity."

|| 10.24.19 ||

ājīvyaikataraṁ bhāvaṁ yas tv anyam upajīvati

na tasmād vindate kṣemaṁ jārān nāry asatī yathā

TRANSLATION

If one thing is actually sustaining our life but we take shelter of something else, how can we achieve any real benefit? We would be like an unfaithful woman, who can never achieve any actual benefit by consorting with her paramour.

COMMENTARY

In this verse Kṛṣṇa speaks of the effects of not following His advice.

|| 10.24.20 ||

varteta brahmāṇā vipro rājanyo rakṣayā bhuvaḥ

vaiśyas tu vārtayā jīvec chūdras tu dvija-sevayā

TRANSLATION

The brāhmaṇa maintains his life by studying and teaching the Vedas, the member of the royal order by protecting the earth, the vaiśya by trade, and the śūdra by serving the higher, twice-born classes.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “The prescribed duty by which we maintain our lives is our object of worship.” Kṛṣṇa gives examples from the different *varṇas*, social positions. Kṛṣṇa contined, “For *brāhmaṇas* the Vedic scriptures are the object of worship. For the *ksatriya* the earth is the object of worship. For the *vaiśya* agriculture, trade, and other occupations are the objects of worship. For the *śūdras* the higher castes are the objects of worship.”

|| 10.24.21 ||

kṛṣi-vāṇijya-go-rakṣā kusīdaṁ tūryam ucyate

vārtā catur-vidhā tatra vayaṁ go-vṛttayo ’niśam

TRANSLATION

The occupational duties of the vaiśya are conceived in four divisions: farming, commerce, cow protection and moneylending. Out of these, we as a community are always engaged in cow protection.

COMMENTARY

Although Kṛṣṇa mentioned *vaiśyas* in the previous verse, He describes the *vaiśyas*' duties in more detail in this verse because Nanda and the others were *vaiśyas*.

Kṛṣṇa said, "There are four occupational duties for the *vaiśya*: agriculture, trade, raising cows and lending money. Among those occupations we are continuously raising cows. Even during times of hardship we have not resorted to the alternative occupations. Thus for us cows are worshipable."

|| 10.24.22 ||

sattvaṁ rajas tama iti sthity-utpatty-anta-hetavaḥ

rajasotpadyate viśvam anyonyaṁ vividhaṁ jagat

TRANSLATION

The causes of creation, maintenance and destruction are the three modes of nature—namely goodness, passion and ignorance. In particular, the mode of passion creates this universe and through sexual combination causes it to become full of variety.

COMMENTARY

Anticipating the possible objection that a livelihood based on cows certainly depends on Lord Indra, who supplies rain, Śrī Kṛṣṇa here introduces a mechanistic theory of existence in two verses known as atheistic Sāṅkhya. By the mode of passion the universe is created, and men and women unite to produce offspring.

|| 10.24.23 ||

rajasā coditā meghā varṣanty ambūni sarvataḥ

prajās tair eva sidhyanti mahendraḥ kiṁ kariṣyati

TRANSLATION

Impelled by the material mode of passion, the clouds pour down their rain everywhere, and by this rain all creatures gain their sustenance. What has the great Indra to do with this arrangement?

COMMENTARY

Śrī Kṛṣṇa continues His mechanistic explanation of existence, concluding *mahendraḥ kiṁ kariṣyati*: "Who needs the great Indra, since the rain, sent by the clouds, which in turn are impelled by the mode of passion, is actually producing everyone's food?" The word *sarvataḥ* indicates that the clouds magnanimously send their rain even on the ocean, rocks and barren land where there is no apparent necessity for such sweet water.

|| 10.24.24 ||

na naḥ purojanapadā na grāmā na gṛhā vayam

vanaukasas tāta nityaṁ vana-śaila-nivāsinaḥ

TRANSLATION

My dear father, our home is not in the cities or towns or villages. Being forest dwellers, we always live in the forest and on the hills.

COMMENTARY

The word *govardhana* means "that which nourishes the cows." Since Govardhana Hill provides abundant grass to feed the cows, the cowherd men should worship it because their occupation depends on having healthy, well-fed cows. This is explained in two verses.

Kṛṣṇa said, "Our home is not in the city or village. Because we move around herding cows our home is the forest and mountains."

|| 10.24.25 ||

tasmād gavāṁ brāhmaṇānām adreś cārabhyatāṁ makhaḥ

ya indra-yāga-sambhārās tair ayaṁ sādhyatāṁ makhaḥ

TRANSLATION

Therefore may a sacrifice for the pleasure of the cows, the brāhmaṇas and Govardhana Hill begin! With all the paraphernalia collected for worshiping Indra, let this sacrifice be performed instead.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, "The blessings of the *brāhmaṇas* give directly perceivable results to us, therefore we should worship them as well the cows and Govardhana Hill." Kṛṣṇa speaks

this verse after convincing Nanda Mahārāja and others. Kṛṣṇa continued, “Let us perform this sacrifice using the ingredients (*sambhārā*) meant for Indra.”

|| 10.24.26 ||

pacyantāṁ vividhāḥ pākāḥ sūpāntāḥ pāyasādayaḥ

saṁyāvāpūpa-śaṣkulyaḥ sarva-dohaś ca gṛhyatām

TRANSLATION

Let many different kinds of food be cooked, from sweet rice to vegetable soups! Many kinds of fancy cakes, both baked and fried, should be prepared. And all the available milk products should be taken for this sacrifice.

COMMENTARY

Pākāḥ refers to cooked rice and vegetables. *Sūpāntāḥ* refers to hot soups and *pāyasādayaḥ* means sweet rice. *Saṁyāvāḥ* refers to fried and baked cakes made of wheat flour. *Sarva-doha* refers to products of the cow such as milk and yogurt.

|| 10.24.27 ||

hūyantām agnayaḥ samyag brāhmaṇair brahma-vādibhiḥ

annaṁ bahu-guṇaṁ tebhyo deyaṁ vo dhenu-dakṣiṇāḥ

TRANSLATION

The brāhmaṇas who are learned in the Vedic mantras must properly invoke the sacrificial fires. Then you should feed the priests with nicely prepared food and reward them with cows and other gifts.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa speaks this verse to assure the quality of the sacrifice and to inspire faith in everyone. Kṛṣṇa said, “You should engage the *brāhmaṇas* in performing sacrifices. Afterwards, you should feed them and reward them with cows and money.”

|| 10.24.28 ||

anyebhyaś cāśva-cāṇḍāla-patitebhyo yathārhataḥ

yavasaṁ ca gavāṁ dattvā giraye dīyatāṁ baliḥ

TRANSLATION

After giving the appropriate food to everyone else, including such fallen souls as dogs and dog-eaters, you should give grass to the cows and then present your respectful offerings to Govardhana Hill.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa speaks this verse in order to make all classes of Vrajavāsīs favorable to His proposal: “Feed everyone from the Brahmin Vaiṣṇavas down to the dogs and dog-eaters. You should feed grass to the cows, and worship Govardhana Hill with sandalwood, flowers and other respectful offerings (*baliḥ*).”

|| 10.24.29 ||

sv-alaṅkṛtā bhuktavantaḥ sv-anuliptāḥ su-vāsasaḥ

pradakṣiṇāṁ ca kuruta go-viprānala-parvatān

TRANSLATION

After everyone has eaten to his satisfaction, you should all dress and decorate yourselves handsomely, smear your bodies with sandalwood paste and then circumambulate the cows, the brāhmaṇas, the sacrificial fires and Govardhana Hill.

|| 10.24.30 ||

etan mama mataṁ tāta kriyatāṁ yadi rocate

ayaṁ go-brāhmaṇādrīṇāṁ mahyaṁ ca dayito makhaḥ

TRANSLATION

This is My idea, O father, and you may carry it out if it appeals to you. Such a sacrifice will be very dear to the cows, the brāhmaṇas and Govardhana Hill, and also to Me.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “This sacrifice will be dear to Me (*mahyam*).”

|| 10.24.31 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

kālātmanā bhagavatā śakra-darpa-jighāṁsayā

proktaṁ niśamya nandādyāḥ sādhv agṛhṇanta tad-vacaḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is Himself powerful time, desired to destroy the false pride of Lord Indra. When Nanda and the other senior men of Vṛndāvana heard Śrī Kṛṣṇa's statement, they accepted His words as proper.

COMMENTARY

Bhagavatā (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) is addressed as *kāla-ātmanā* (the time force), to indicate that Kṛṣṇa will destroy the sacrifice to Indra. After hearing from Kṛṣṇa, Nanda Mahārāja and the cowherd men accepted His proposal.

|| 10.24.32-33 ||

tathā ca vyadadhuḥ sarvaṁ yathāha madhusūdanaḥ

vācayitvā svasty-ayanaṁ tad-dravyeṇa giri-dvijān

upahṛtya balīn samyag ādṛtā yavasaṁ gavām

go-dhanāni puraskṛtya giriṁ cakruḥ pradakṣiṇam

TRANSLATION

The cowherd community then did all that Madhusūdana had suggested. They arranged for the brāhmaṇas to recite the auspicious Vedic mantras, and using the paraphernalia that had been intended for Indra's sacrifice, they presented offerings to Govardhana Hill and the brāhmaṇas with reverential respect. They also gave grass to the cows. Then, placing the cows, bulls and calves in front of them, they circumambulated Govardhana.

COMMENTARY

The cowherd men respectfully (*ādṛtā*) offered the *brāhmaṇas* and Govardhana Hill (*giridvijān*) the items meant for Indra. They also gave grass to the cows (*gavām*), placed the cows in front of them, and circumambulated Govardhana Hill.

|| 10.24.34 ||

anāṁsy anaḍud-yuktāni te cāruhya sv-alaṅkṛtāḥ

gopyaś ca kṛṣṇa-vīryāṇi gāyantyaḥ sa-dvijāśiṣaḥ

TRANSLATION

As the beautifully ornamented cowherd ladies followed along, riding on wagons drawn by oxen, they sang the glories of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and their songs mingled with the brāhmaṇas' chanting of benedictions.

COMMENTARY

After yoking the bulls to the carts, the cowherd men and women went around Govardhana Hill. Their beautiful songs glorifying Kṛṣṇa blended harmoniously with the *brāhmaṇas*' prayers of benediction.

|| 10.24.35 ||

kṛṣṇas tv anyatamaṁ rūpaṁ gopa-viśrambhaṇaṁ gataḥ

śailo 'smīti bruvan bhūri balim ādad bṛhad-vapuḥ

TRANSLATION

Kṛṣṇa then assumed an unprecedented, huge form to instill faith in the cowherd men. Declaring "I am Govardhana Mountain!" He ate the abundant offerings.

COMMENTARY

In order to show the superiority of the sacrifice instituted by Himself, and to increase the faith of all the Vrajavāsīs in it, Kṛṣṇa appeared in another (*anyatamaṁ*) huge personal form (*rūpaṁ*), which was like a second mountain standing atop of Govardhana. By doing this Kṛṣṇa convinced the cowherd men that He and Govardhana Hill are identical. The Vrajavāsīs thought, "Kṛṣṇa is the hill!"

“I am Govardhana Mountain” means “I am the presiding master of this region. Being pleased with your devotion, I have appeared. Please ask for anything You desire.” Saying this Kṛṣṇa then accepted the offerings (*balim*) of food made by persons both near and as far away as Nandagram. Some preparations were seen by the Vrajavāsīs at Govardhana Hill, but the others that were offered in meditation were invisible to them. With thousands and millions of hands, which were both short and long, He ate all those offerings from every direction. Thus He filled everyone with joy by eating all the food.

|| 10.24.36 ||

tasmai namo vraja-janaiḥ saha cakra ātmanātmane

aho paśyata śailo ’sau rūpī no ’nugrahaṁ vyadhāt

TRANSLATION

Together with the people of Vraja, the Lord bowed down to this form of Govardhana Hill, thus in effect offering obeisances to Himself. Then He said, “Just see how this hill has appeared in person and bestowed mercy upon us!

COMMENTARY

In His form as a child standing among the festival-goers of Vṛndāvana, Kṛṣṇa led the Vrajavāsīs in bowing down to His new incarnation as Govardhana Hill, which was nothing but an expanded form of Himself. Then Kṛṣṇa spoke in one and half verses: “See how this hill has been merciful to us. This Govardhana Hill, assuming any form he wishes (such as snakes) will kill those who disrespect this sacrifice. Therefore we should offer respects to him.”

|| 10.24.37 ||

eṣo ’vajānato martyān kāma-rūpī vanaukasaḥ

hanti hy asmai namasyāmaḥ śarmaṇe ātmano gavām

TRANSLATION

“This Govardhana Hill, assuming any form he wishes, will kill any residents of the forest who neglect him. Therefore let us pay our obeisances to him for the safety of ourselves and our cows.”

|| 10.24.38 ||

ity adri-go-dvija-makhaṁ vāsudeva-pracoditāḥ

yathā vidhāya te gopā saha-kṛṣṇā vrajaṁ yayuḥ

TRANSLATION

The members of the cowherd community, having thus been inspired by Lord Vāsudeva to properly execute the sacrifice to Govardhana Hill, the cows and the brāhmaṇas, returned with Lord Kṛṣṇa to their village, Vraja.

COMMENTARY

Although these philosophies are not followed by devotees, Kṛṣṇa cited the atheistic Sāṅkhya and Karma-mīmāṁsā in order to stop the sacrifice to Indra. According to Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī, Śrī Kṛṣṇa presented six theoretical points in this chapter: 1) that *karma* alone is sufficient to determine one's destiny; 2) that one's conditioned nature (*svabhāva*) is the supreme controller; 3) that the modes of nature (*guṇas*) are the supreme controller; 4) that the Supreme Lord is simply a dependent aspect of karma; 5) that He is under the control of karma; and 6) that one's occupation is the actual worshipable deity.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa presented these arguments not because He believed them, but rather because He wanted to stop the impending sacrifice to Indra and divert it to Himself in the form of Govardhana Hill. In this way Kṛṣṇa desired to agitate that falsely proud demigod.

Thus ends the commentary on the Twenty Fourth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Twenty-five

Lord Kṛṣṇa Lifts Govardhana Hill

|| 10.25.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

indras tadātmanaḥ pūjāṁ vijñāya vihatāṁ nṛpa

gopebhyaḥ kṛṣṇa-nāthebhyo nandādibhyaś cukopa ha

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: My dear King Parīkṣit, when Indra understood that his sacrifice had been put aside, he became furious with Nanda Mahārāja and the other cowherd men, who were accepting Kṛṣṇa as their Lord.

COMMENTARY

This chapter describes how Lord Indra, overcome by anger, sent rain to destroy the people of Vraja. To protect Vraja, Kṛṣṇa held Govardhana Hill in His left hand for seven days. Śukadeva Gosvāmī immediately reveals the foolishness of Indra and the absurdity of his anger.

|| 10.25.2 ||

gaṇaṁ sāṁvartakaṁ nāma meghānāṁ cānta-kārīṇām

indraḥ pracodayat kruddho vākyaṁ cāheśa-māny uta

TRANSLATION

Angry Indra sent forth the clouds of universal destruction, known as Sāṁvartaka. Imagining himself the supreme controller, he spoke as follows.

COMMENTARY

This verse describes Indra's anger. *Sāṁvartaka* refers to the clouds used for destruction of the universe. *Ca* indicates that the seven winds of destruction such as *āvaha* and *pravaha* were also sent. Due to excessive pride, Indra arrogantly considered himself to be the supreme controller (*īśa-mānī*).

|| 10.25.3 ||

aho śrī-mada-māhātmyaṁ gopānāṁ kānanaukasām

kṛṣṇaṁ martyam upāśritya ye cakrur deva-helanam

TRANSLATION

[Indra said:] Just see how these cowherd men living in the forest have become so greatly intoxicated by their prosperity! They have surrendered to an ordinary human being, Kṛṣṇa, and thus they have offended the gods.

COMMENTARY

Indra said, "I am astonished to see the amount of wealth and bliss of these cowherd men!" Being inspired by Goddess Sarasvatī, we can understand that Indra was really saying that the cowherd men had offended him by taking shelter of Kṛṣṇa, whom Indra considered to be *martya*, a mortal. Kṛṣṇa is called *martyam* because He appears to give auspiciousness to the ignorant souls of the material world.

|| 10.25.4 ||

yathādṛḍhaiḥ karma-mayaiḥ kratubhir nāma-nau-nibhaiḥ

vidyām ānvīkṣikīṁ hitvā titīrṣanti bhavārṇavam

TRANSLATION

Their taking shelter of Kṛṣṇa is just like the foolish attempt of men who abandon transcendental knowledge of the self and instead try to cross over the great ocean of material existence in the false boats of fruitive, ritual sacrifices.

COMMENTARY

Vaiṣṇavas desiring to cross the ocean of material existence take shelter of Kṛṣṇa, and reject the quest for *brahma-jñāna* (knowledge of Brahman). Indra said, "These cowherd men have become absorbed in a sacrifice as a means to cross the ocean of material existence. The Vrajavāsīs have foolishly taken shelter of Kṛṣṇa in hopes He will reduce the ocean to the water contained in a calf's hoof print."

|| 10.25.5 ||

vācālaṁ bāliśaṁ stabdham ajñaṁ paṇḍita-māninam

kṛṣṇaṁ martyam upāśritya gopā me cakrur apriyam

TRANSLATION

These cowherd men have acted inimically toward me by taking shelter of this ordinary human being, Kṛṣṇa, who thinks Himself very wise but who is simply a foolish, arrogant, overtalkative child.

COMMENTARY

Indra said, "Kṛṣṇa is over talkative (*vācālaṁ*), speaking many audacious arguments in the line of Karma-mīmāṁsā and Sāṅkhya philosophy even though He does not accept these arguments; thus He is *bāliśa*, "foolish." He is *stabdha* (disrespectful) because He speaks boldly even in the presence of His own father. Because He is ignorant (*ajñaṁ*), all He can do is herd cows, but He thinks Himself a learned man (*paṇḍita-māninam*). Although I am a demigod, they neglect me to honor Him, a mere human being (*martyam*), and thus they offend me."

Through the insults of Indra, Goddess Sarasvatī is actually praising Kṛṣṇa thus: By Kṛṣṇa's mercy even a fool (*bāliśa*) becomes expert in speaking (*vācālam*) according to Vedic authority. *Stabdham* means that Kṛṣṇa bows down to no one because there is no one for Him to offer homage to, *Ajñam* means that there is nothing more for Kṛṣṇa to know because He is omniscient, and *paṇḍita-māninam* means that Kṛṣṇa is highly honored by the knowers of the Absolute Truth.

|| 10.25.6 ||

eṣāṁ śriyāvaliptānāṁ kṛṣṇenādhmāpitātmanām

dhunuta śrī-mada-stambhaṁ paśūn nayata saṅkṣayam

TRANSLATION

[To the clouds of destruction King Indra said:] The prosperity of these people has made them mad with pride, and their arrogance is backed up by Kṛṣṇa. Now go and remove their pride and bring their animals to destruction.

COMMENTARY

Indra said, "Due to wealth these cowherd men are mad with pride and their minds (*atma*) have been influenced by Kṛṣṇa. You should remove their pride and kill their cows."

The unintentional inner meaning of Indra's words is as follows: "The cowherd men are anointed with sandalwood pulp (*Śrīya avalipta*). You clouds should remove (*dhunuta*) the heat in their bodies with cool rain and refresh the cows, making them tremble in delight. When Kṛṣṇa lifts Govardhana, you should allow Him to make a beautiful place (*saṅyak kṣayam*) to stay." The word *kṣayam* means residence as well as destruction.

|| 10.25.7 ||

ahaṁ cairāvataṁ nāgam āruhyānuvraje vrajam

marud-gaṇair mahā-vegair nanda-goṣṭha-jighāṁsayā

TRANSLATION

I will follow you to Vraja, riding on my elephant Airāvata and taking with me the swift and powerful wind-gods to decimate the cowherd village of Nanda Mahārāja.

COMMENTARY

Indra spoke to the frightened clouds, "I will also come behind you desiring to destroy (*jighāṁsayā*) the cowherd pastures of Nanda." The real meaning is "I am also coming, desiring to see the cowherd pastures of Nanda."

|| 10.25.8 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

itthaṁ maghavatājñaptā meghā nirmukta-bandhanāḥ

nanda-gokulam āsāraiḥ pīḍayām āsur ojasā

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: On Indra's order the clouds of universal destruction, released untimely from their bonds, went to the cowherd pastures of Nanda Mahārāja. There they began to torment the inhabitants by powerfully pouring down torrents of rain upon them.

|| 10.25.9 ||

vidyotamānā vidyudbhiḥ stanantaḥ stanayitnubhiḥ

tīvrair marud-gaṇair nunnā vavṛṣur jala-śarkarāḥ

TRANSLATION

Propelled by the fearsome wind-gods, the clouds blazed with lightning bolts and roared with thunder as they hurled down hailstones.

COMMENTARY

Indra sent forth the Sāṁvartaka clouds which could cover the entire earth with a single vast ocean. Losing his discrimination because of anger, Indra released those clouds without considering the magnitude of their power. Rumbling with thunder (*stanayitnubhiḥ*), the clouds moved (*nunnā*) here and there being pushed by *āvaha* and *pravaha* winds (*marudgaṇaiḥ*). The clouds poured down hailstones (*jala-śarkarāḥ*).

|| 10.25.10 ||

sthūṇā-sthūlā varṣa-dhārā muñcatsv abhreṣv abhīkṣṇaśaḥ

jalaughaiḥ plāvyamānā bhūr nādṛśyata natonnatam

TRANSLATION

As the clouds released torrents of rain as thick as massive columns, the earth was submerged in the flood, and high ground could no longer be distinguished from low.

COMMENTARY

The clouds poured down torrents of rain in sheets as thick as pillars which flooded the earth with water. Due to the flooding, one could not distinguish high land from low.

|| 10.25.11 ||

aty-āsārāti-vātena paśavo jāta-vepanāḥ

gopā gopyaś ca śītārtā govindaṁ śaraṇaṁ yayuḥ

TRANSLATION

The cows and other animals, shivering from the excessive rain and wind, and the cowherd men and ladies, pained by the cold, all approached Lord Govinda for shelter.

|| 10.25.12 ||

śiraḥ sutāṁś ca kāyena pracchādyāsāra-pīḍitāḥ

vepamānā bhagavataḥ pāda-mūlam upāyayuḥ

TRANSLATION

Trembling from the distress brought about by the severe rainfall, and trying to cover their heads and calves with their own bodies, the cows approached the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

COMMENTARY

The cows covered the heads of their calves with their own bodies.

|| 10.25.13 ||

kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa mahā-bhāga tvan-nāthaṁ gokulaṁ prabho

trātum arhasi devān naḥ kupitād bhakta-vatsala

TRANSLATION

[The cowherd men and women addressed the Lord:] Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, O most fortunate one, please deliver the cows from the wrath of Indra! O Lord, You are so affectionate to Your devotees. Please save us also.

COMMENTARY

Remembering the prediction of Garga Muni: *anena sarva-durgāṇi yūyam añjas tariṣyathā,* "By His grace you will easily cross beyond all difficulties" (*Bhag*. 10.8.16), the Vrajavāsīs were confident that in such a time of danger, Lord Nārāyaṇa would empower Kṛṣṇa to protect them. With this conviction they pray in this verse. The word *devān* refers to Indra.

|| 10.25.14 ||

śilā-varṣāti-vātena hanyamānam acetanam

nirīkṣya bhagavān mene kupitendra-kṛtaṁ hariḥ

TRANSLATION

Seeing the inhabitants of His Gokula rendered practically uncon-scious by the onslaught of hail and blasting wind, the Supreme Lord Hari understood that this was the work of angry Indra.

COMMENTARY

Even before being informed that the rain was created by Indra, Kṛṣṇa understood that Indra was responsible. The severe distress Indra apparently inflicted upon the residents of Vṛndāvana was an arrangement made by Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastime potency (*līlā-śakti*) so that Kṛṣṇa could taste the sweetness of their prema to His full satisfaction. For a hungry person, the pain of hunger increases the happiness he feels when he finally eats excellent food, and thus hunger can be said to enhance the pleasure of eating.

|| 10.25.15 ||

apartv aty-ulbaṇaṁ varṣam ati-vātaṁ śilā-mayam

sva-yāge vihate 'smābhir indro nāśāya varṣati

TRANSLATION

[Śrī Kṛṣṇa said to Himself:] Because We have stopped his sacrifice, Indra has caused this unusually fierce, unseasonable rain, together with terrible winds and hail.

COMMENTARY

Understanding that it was Indra's work, Kṛṣṇa spoke to the Vraja-vāsīs in five verses. The fierce rain full of hailstones (*śilā-mayam*) was unseasonable, belonging to a season already passed.

|| 10.25.16 ||

tatra pratividhiṁ samyag ātma-yogena sādhaye

lokeśa-mānināṁ mauḍhyād dhaniṣye śrī-madaṁ tamaḥ

TRANSLATION

By My mystic power I will completely counteract this disturbance caused by Indra. Demigods like Indra are proud of their opulence, and out of foolishness they falsely consider themselves the Lord of the universe. I will now destroy such ignorance.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, "I will remedy the situation through My mystic potency (*ātma-yogena*). Being falsely proud of their power due to the mode of ignorance, these demigods think of themselves as Lords. I will now destroy this ignorance." This verse refers not only to Indra, but also to Vāyu and the other demigods who assisted him.

|| 10.25.17 ||

na hi sad-bhāva-yuktānāṁ surāṇām īśa-vismayaḥ

matto 'satāṁ māna-bhaṅgaḥ praśamāyopakalpate

TRANSLATION

Since the demigods are endowed with the mode of goodness, the false pride of considering oneself the Lord should certainly not affect them. When I break the false prestige of those bereft of goodness, My purpose is to bring them relief.

COMMENTARY

"I am not going to completely crush this weak Indra out of spite, but I will correct this fault of false pride which has arisen in My devotee." With this intention Kṛṣṇa speaks this verse.

|| 10.25.18 ||

tasmān mac-charaṇaṁ goṣṭhaṁ man-nāthaṁ mat-parigraham

gopāye svātma-yogena so 'yaṁ me vrata āhitaḥ

TRANSLATION

I must therefore protect the cowherd community by My transcen-dental potency, for I am their shelter, I am their master, and indeed they are My own family. After all, I have taken a vow to protect My devotees.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, "I will protect the cowherd community (*goṣṭham*) from this disturbance created by Indra because Vraja is my home (*mac-charaṇaṁ* means *mat-śaraṇam*) and I am the master (*mat-nātha*) of the house." The *Anekārtha-varga* dictionary, *śaraṇaṁ gṛha-rakṣitroḥ*: "The word *śaraṇam* can mean either home or protector."

Kṛṣṇa said, "Vraja is the place where My father, brother and dear ones (*mat-parigraham*) live. Not only will I protect these people from this disturbance, but I protect all people even at the time of *mahā-pralaya* (annihilation of the universe)." To indicate this, Kṛṣṇa says, "I have taken this vow (*me vrata āhitaḥ*)."

|| 10.25.19 ||

ity uktvaikena hastena kṛtvā govardhanācalam

dadhāra līlayā viṣṇuś chatrākam iva bālakaḥ

TRANSLATION

Having said this, Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is Viṣṇu Himself, picked up Govardhana Hill with one hand and held it aloft just as easily as a child holds up a mushroom.

COMMENTARY

Hari-vaṁśa confirms that Śrī Kṛṣṇa picked up Govardhana Hill with His left hand: *sa dhṛtaḥ saṅgato meghair giriḥ savyena pāṇinā,* "With His left hand Kṛṣṇa picked up that mountain, which was touching the clouds." With the umbrella of Girirāja, Kṛṣṇa blocked the Sāṁvartaka clouds and created a living space in the form of a house beneath the mountain. Kṛṣṇa held the mountain without any difficulty, just like a child holding a mushroom. When Kṛṣṇa was preparing to lift Govardhana Hill, a partial expansion of His Yogamāyā potency named Samhārikī temporarily removed all the rain from the sky so that as Kṛṣṇa ran very swiftly from the porch of His house to the mountain, neither His turban nor other garments became wet.

|| 10.25.20 ||

athāha bhagavān gopān he 'mba tāta vrajaukasaḥ

yathopajoṣaṁ viśata giri-gartaṁ sa-go-dhanāḥ

TRANSLATION

The Lord then addressed the cowherd community: O Mother, O Father, O residents of Vraja, if you wish you may now come under this hill with your cows.

COMMENTARY

"Now you can all comfortably take shelter under Govardhana Hill."

The Vrajavāsīs replied, "But how can our cowherd community, which includes many thousands of cows, calves, bulls and so on fit under Govardhana which is only three miles across?" Here is the answer.

Because Govardhana Hill was in ecstasy, being touched by Kṛṣṇa's hand, it acquired inconceivable power and even felt the hundreds of deadly thunderbolts thrown upon its back by angry Indra to be offerings of soft, fragrant flowers. At times Śrī Govardhana was not even aware that the thunderbolts were striking. Govardhana expanded his form to thirty-two miles so that all the inhabitants, cows, buffalos and other animals could live comfortably beneath his shelter.

In *Hari-vaṁśa*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself says, *trai-lokyam apy utsahate rakṣituṁ kiṁ punar vrajam*: “Śrī Govardhana can give shelter to all the three worlds, what to speak of the simple land of Vraja.” According to *Hari-vaṁśa*, when Kṛṣṇa lifted Govardhana the mountain extended beyond the clouds. The deer, wild hogs, and other animals and birds standing on the hill’s flanks climbed up to Govardhana’s peaks, which were now higher than the clouds, and thus even they did not experience the slightest distress.

|| 10.25.21 ||

na trāsa iha vaḥ kāryo mad-dhastādri-nipātanāt

vāta-varṣa-bhayenālaṁ tat-trāṇaṁ vihitaṁ hi vaḥ

TRANSLATION

You should have no fear that this mountain will fall from My hand. And don’t be afraid of the wind and rain, for your deliverance from these afflictions has already been arranged.

|| 10.25.22 ||

tathā nirviviśur gartaṁ kṛṣṇāśvāsita-mānasaḥ

yathāvakāśaṁ sa-dhanāḥ sa-vrajāḥ sopajīvinaḥ

TRANSLATION

Their minds thus pacified by Lord Kṛṣṇa, they all entered beneath the hill, where they found ample room for themselves and all their cows, wagons, servants and priests, and for all other members of the community as well.

COMMENTARY

They went beneath the mountain with their carts (*sa-vrajāḥ*), and their dependents such as their servants and priests (*sa-upajīvinaḥ*).

|| 10.25.23 ||

kṣut-tṛḍ-vyathāṁ sukhāpekṣāṁ hitvā tair vraja-vāsibhiḥ

vīkṣyamāṇo dadhārādriṁ saptāhaṁ nācalat padāt

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa, forgetting hunger and thirst and putting aside all considerations of personal pleasure, stood there holding up the hill for seven days as the people of Vraja gazed upon Him.

COMMENTARY

The Vrajavāsīs forgot about hunger and thirst for seven days because they were immersed in the ecstatic bliss of seeing Kṛṣṇa continu-ously. This is explained in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa:

> *vrajaika-vāsibhir harṣa-vismitākṣair nirīkṣitaḥ*
>
> *gopa-gopī-janair hṛṣṭaiḥ prīti-visphāritekṣaṇaiḥ*
>
> *saṁstūyamāna-caritaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ śailam adhārayat*
>
> "Śrī Kṛṣṇa held up the mountain while His praises were chanted by the Vrajavāsīs, all of whom now had the opportunity to dwell together with Him, and who glanced at Him with joyful and amazed eyes. Thus the cowherd men and women were all elated, and out of loving affection they opened their eyes wide."

It should be understood that Kṛṣṇa stood directly facing everyone. By continuously drinking the nectar of the beauty and sweetness of Kṛṣṇa, the Vrajavāsīs felt no hunger, thirst or fatigue, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa, by seeing the beautiful forms of His beloved gopīs, also forgot about eating, drinking and sleeping. The seven days of continuous rain from the Sāṁvartaka clouds failed to flood the district of Mathurā because the Supreme Lord, simply by His *icchā-śakti* (Supreme will power), immediately dried up the water as it fell to the ground. For the Vrajavāsīs the seven days passed as if they were one *ghaṭikā*. [One *ghaṭikā* equals 24 minutes]

|| 10.25.24 ||

kṛṣṇa-yogānubhāvaṁ taṁ niśamyendro 'ti-vismitaḥ

nistambho bhraṣṭa-saṅkalpaḥ svān meghān sannyavārayat

TRANSLATION

When Indra observed this exhibition of Lord Kṛṣṇa's mystic power, he became most astonished. Pulled down from his platform of false pride, and his intentions thwarted, he ordered his clouds to desist.

COMMENTARY

His pride deflated, Indra withdrew the clouds out of fear that Kṛṣṇa would punish him.

|| 10.25.25 ||

khaṁ vyabhram uditādityaṁ vāta-varṣaṁ ca dāruṇam

niśamyoparataṁ gopān govardhana-dharo 'bravīt

TRANSLATION

Seeing that the fierce wind and rain had now ceased, the sky had become clear of rainclouds, and the sun had risen, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the lifter of Govardhana Hill, spoke to the cowherd community as follows.

|| 10.25.26 ||

niryāta tyajata trāsaṁ gopāḥ sa-strī-dhanārbhakāḥ

upārataṁ vāta-varṣaṁ vyuda-prāyāś ca nimnagāḥ

TRANSLATION

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] My dear cowherd men, please go out with your wives, children and possessions. Give up your fear. The wind and rain have stopped, and the rivers' high waters have subsided.

COMMENTARY

Vyuda-prāyās means the rivers were practically devoid of water.

|| 10.25.27 ||

tatas te niryayur gopāḥ svaṁ svam ādāya go-dhanam

śakaṭoḍhopakaraṇaṁ strī-bāla-sthavirāḥ śanaiḥ

TRANSLATION

After collecting their respective cows and loading their paraphernalia into their wagons, the cowherd men went out. The women, children and elderly persons gradually followed them.

COMMENTARY

After loading their goods on the carts (*śakaṭo-ḍhopakaraṇaṁ*), the cowherd men emerged from under the mountain.

|| 10.25.28 ||

bhagavān api taṁ śailaṁ sva-sthāne pūrva-vat prabhuḥ

paśyatāṁ sarva-bhūtānāṁ sthāpayām āsa līlayā

TRANSLATION

While all living creatures looked on, the Supreme Personality of Godhead put down the hill in its original place, just as it had stood before.

|| 10.25.29 ||

taṁ prema-vegān nirbhṛtā vrajaukaso yathā samīyuḥ parirambhaṇādibhiḥ

gopyaś ca sa-sneham apūjayan mudā dadhy-akṣatādbhir yuyujuḥ sad-āśiṣaḥ

TRANSLATION

All the residents of Vṛndāvana were overwhelmed with ecstatic love, and they came forward and greeted Śrī Kṛṣṇa according to their individual relationships with Him—some embracing Him, others bowing down to Him, and so forth. The cowherd women presented water mixed with yogurt and unbroken barleycorns as a token of honor, and they showered auspicious benedictions upon Him.

COMMENTARY

Overwhelmed (*nirbhṛtāḥ*) in love, each of the Vrajavāsīs approached (*samīyuḥ*) Kṛṣṇa according to his position (*yathā*)—as an inferior, younger member of the community; as an equal; or as a superior—and they dealt with Him accordingly. Kṛṣṇa's superiors offered auspicious benedictions, lovingly smelled His head, kissed Him, massaged His left arm (which held up the mountain), cracked the fingers of His left hand, and inquired with parental affection as to whether He was tired or pained. Kṛṣṇa's equals laughed or joked with Him, and those who were younger fell at His feet, massaged His feet, and so on.

The word ca in this verse indicates that the wives of the *brāhmaṇas* joined with the cowherd ladies (*gopyaḥ*) to offer auspicious items like yogurt and unbroken grains. They gave blessings to Kṛṣṇa by saying, "May You subdue the wicked, protect the decent people, give pleasure to Your parents and be enriched with all wealth and opulence."

|| 10.25.30 ||

yaśodā rohiṇī nando rāmaś ca balināṁ varaḥ

kṛṣṇam āliṅgya yuyujur āśiṣaḥ sneha-kātarāḥ

TRANSLATION

Mother Yaśodā, mother Rohiṇī, Nanda Mahārāja and Balarāma, the greatest of the strong, all embraced Kṛṣṇa. Overwhelmed with affection, they offered Him their blessings.

COMMENTARY

The very special position of Kṛṣṇa's own mother and other intimate relatives, however, is stated in this verse beginning with Yaśodā. It is not unsuitable to include Balarāma in the group that feels parental affection (*vātsalya-bhāva*) toward Kṛṣṇa. because Balarāma acts in that capacity as Kṛṣṇa's elder brother. One may object saying, "Since Balarāma is so affectionate, why didn't He assume His plenary expansion of Ananta Śeṣa, since He is already holding up the earth, and Himself enact the great feat of holding up Govardhana Hill on behalf His younger brother?" The answer is that once Kṛṣṇa made His decision to stop Indra's sacrifice, to worship Govardhana, and to lift Govardhana Hill in order to protect the Vrajavāsīs, it would be improper and impossible for His *aṁśa* (plenary portion), Balarāma, to do anything else. Thus Balarāma did not show His powers. As Kṛṣṇa is the *śaktiman*, the possessor of innumerable potencies, by His desire alone suitable powers will appear when necessary in His *aṁśa*. In succeeding verses also this conclusion is mentioned.

In this regard, sometimes ancient paintings show Kṛṣṇa as Giridhārī being given butter by His two mothers Yaśodā and Rohiṇī while Nanda Mahārāja and Balarāma hold up Govardhana Hill with their heads or sticks. In the *Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī,* Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī says that this occurred due to being overwhelmed by love. Thus in this verse they are described as being beside themselves (*kātarāḥ*) out of their affection (*sneha*) for Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.25.31 ||

divi deva-gaṇāḥ siddhāḥ sādhyā gandharva-cāraṇāḥ

tuṣṭuvur mumucus tuṣṭāḥ puṣpa-varṣāṇi pārthiva

TRANSLATION

In the heavens, O King, all the demigods, including the Siddhas, Sādhyas, Gandharvas and Cāraṇas, sang the praises of Lord Kṛṣṇa and showered down flowers in great satisfaction.

COMMENTARY

The demigods in heaven were just as jubilant as the Vrajavāsīs, and thus a great universal festival took place.

|| 10.25.32 ||

śaṅkha-dundubhayo nedur divi deva-pracoditāḥ

jagur gandharva-patayas tumburu-pramukhā nṛpa

TRANSLATION

My dear Parīkṣit, the demigods in heaven resoundingly played their conchshells and kettledrums, and the best of the Gandharvas, led by Tumburu, began to sing.

|| 10.25.33 ||

tato 'nuraktaiḥ paśupaiḥ pariśrito rājan sva-goṣṭhaṁ sa-balo 'vrajad dhariḥ

tathā-vidhāny asya kṛtāni gopīkā gāyantya īyur muditā hṛdi-spṛśaḥ

TRANSLATION

Surrounded by His loving cowherd boyfriends and Lord Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa then went off to the place where He had been tending His cows. The cowherd girls returned to their homes, singing joyfully about the lifting of Govardhana Hill and other glorious deeds performed by Lord Kṛṣṇa, who had so deeply touched their hearts.

COMMENTARY

While Kṛṣṇa was lifting Govardhana Hill, Rādhā and other beloved gopīs, unnoticed by others, were intimately associating with Him by exchanging secret glances from a distance. While returning to their homes the gopīs lovingly sang about Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. It should be understood that the gopīs had the ability to immediately compose songs about Kṛṣṇa's pastimes.

Gopīkā hṛdi-spṛśah—can mean the gopīs who touched Kṛṣṇa in their prema-filled hearts or who always meditated on Kṛṣṇa. Or it can mean some very dear gopīs whom Kṛṣṇa embraced to His chest or in His mind. This phrase describes a quality of Kṛṣṇa.

Thus ends the commentary on the Twenty Fifth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Twenty-six

Wonderful Kṛṣṇa

|| 10.26.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

evaṁ-vidhāni karmāṇi gopāḥ kṛṣṇasya vīkṣya te

atad-vīrya-vidaḥ procuḥ samabhyetya su-vismitāḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: The cowherd men were astonished when they saw Kṛṣṇa's activities, such as lifting Govardhana Hill. Unable to understand His transcendental potency, they approached Nanda Mahārāja and spoke as follows.

COMMENTARY

In this chapter Nanda Mahārāja describes Kṛṣṇa's opulences as he had heard of them from Garga Muni, in order to remove the doubts of the cowherd men about Kṛṣṇa's powers.

Because all the Vrajavāsīs were immersed in tasting the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa while He lifted Govardhana Hill, the opportunity to think about Kṛṣṇa's astonishing power did not arise. Afterwards, when they had returned to their homes, they all began to have a

doubt. Thus they thought, “Now we have directly seen child Kṛṣṇa lift Govardhana Hill, and we remember how He killed Pūtanā and other demons, extinguished the forest fire and so on. At the time, we thought that these extraordinary acts occurred because of a benediction from the *brāhmaṇas* or because of Nanda Mahārāja’s great fortune or that perhaps this boy had achieved the mercy of Lord Nārāyaṇa and was thus empowered by Him.

“But all these presumptions are false, because an ordinary seven-year old boy could never hold up the king of mountains for seven whole days. Kṛṣṇa is not a human being. He must be the Supreme Lord Himself.

“But on the other hand, child Kṛṣṇa loves it when we coddle Him, and He becomes morose when we—His father, mother, aunts, uncles and well-wishers, simply worldly cowherd men— do not give Him attention. He appears to become hungry and thirsty, steals yogurt and milk, sometimes plays tricks, blatantly tells lies, chatters childishly and tends the calves. If He is actually the Supreme Lord, why would He do these things? Don’t they indicate that He is an ordinary human child?”

“We are totally unable to establish the truth of Kṛṣṇa’s identity. Therefore let us go and inquire from the highly intelligent King of Vraja, Nanda Mahārāja, and he shall free us from our doubts.”

Thinking in this way, the cowherd men entered Nanda Mahārāja’s great assembly hall and questioned him as described in the following verse.

|| 10.26.2 ||

bālakasya yad etāni karmāṇy aty-adbhutāni vai

katham arhaty asau janma grāmyeṣv ātma-jugupsitam

TRANSLATION

[The cowherd men said:] Since this boy performs such extra-ordinary activities, how could He warrant a birth among worldly men like us—a birth that for Him would seem contemptible?

COMMENTARY

The cowherd men said, “Since this boy has performed such astonishing activities, He cannot be an ordinary boy but He must be God. But if that is so, how could He be born

in a cowherd family and become the object of criticism? Even the minor *avatāras* are not born in such low family as ours, what to speak of the outstanding *avatāras*."

The use of the word *asau* to denote Kṛṣṇa indicates that He was not present because He had gone to the forest. The full expression of their feelings could take place only in Kṛṣṇa's absence.

|| 10.26.3 ||

yaḥ sapta-hāyano bālaḥ kareṇaikena līlayā

kathaṁ bibhrad giri-varaṁ puṣkaraṁ gaja-rāḍ iva

TRANSLATION

How could this seven-year-old boy playfully hold up the great hill Govardhana with one hand, just as a mighty elephant holds up a lotus flower?

COMMENTARY

The cowherd men said, "If this child is not the Supreme Lord, how could He perform such astonishing feats?" This is the intention of the next twelve verses. How did a seven-year-old boy hold (*bibhrat*) Govardhana in one hand for seven days? The following verses answer this question.

|| 10.26.4 ||

tokenāmīlitākṣeṇa pūtanāyā mahaujasaḥ

pītaḥ stanaḥ saha prāṇaiḥ kāleneva vayas tanoḥ

TRANSLATION

As a mere infant who had hardly yet opened His eyes, He drank the breast milk of the powerful demoness Pūtanā and then sucked out her very life air as well, just as the force of time sucks out the youth of one's body.

COMMENTARY

Here the cowherd men mean to say, "How could a mere infant with half-closed eyes (*ā-mīlita*) so easily kill a very powerful demoness?" Half-closed eyes indicates that this was done unseen by others, just as, unnoticed, the irresistible power of time takes away one's life.

|| 10.26.5 ||

hinvato ’dhaḥ śayānasya māsyasya caraṇāv udak

ano ’patad viparyastaṁ rudataḥ prapadāhatam

TRANSLATION

Once, when only three months old, little Kṛṣṇa was crying and kicking up His feet as He lay beneath a huge cart. Then the cart fell and turned upside-down simply because it was struck by the tip of His toe.

COMMENTARY

Here the cowherd men mean to say, “How could Kṛṣṇa when He was only three months old kick up His feet as He lay beneath a huge cart, and strike it with such force that it turned over and collapsed?”

|| 10.26.6 ||

eka-hāyana āsīno hriyamāṇo vihāyasā

daityena yas tṛṇāvartam ahan kaṇṭha-grahāturam

TRANSLATION

At the age of one, while sitting peacefully He was taken up into the sky by the demon Tṛṇāvarta. But baby Kṛṣṇa grabbed the demon’s neck, causing him great pain, and thus killed him.

COMMENTARY

Here the cowherd men mean to say, “How could Kṛṣṇa at the age of one kill the demon Tṛṇāvarta after being whisked into the sky?”

|| 10.26.7 ||

kvacid dhaiyaṅgava-stainye mātrā baddha udūkhale

gacchann arjunayor madhye bāhubhyāṁ tāv apātayat

TRANSLATION

Once, His mother tied Him with ropes to a mortar because she had caught Him stealing butter. Then, crawling on His hands, He dragged the mortar between a pair of arjuna trees and pulled them down.

COMMENTARY

Here the cowherd men mean to say, “How could Kṛṣṇa, who was tied up for stealing butter, crawl away and knock down a pair of *arjuna* trees?”

|| 10.26.8 ||

vane sañcārayan vatsān sa-rāmo bālakair vṛtaḥ

hantu-kāmaṁ bakaṁ dorbhyāṁ mukhato ’rim apāṭayat

TRANSLATION

Another time, when Kṛṣṇa was tending the calves in the forest together with Balarāma and the cowherd boys, the demon Bakāsura came with the intention of killing Kṛṣṇa. But Kṛṣṇa seized this inimical demon by the mouth and tore him apart.

COMMENTARY

Here the cowherd men mean to say, “How could He hold the beaks of the Baka and bifurcate them?”

|| 10.26.9 ||

vatseṣu vatsa-rūpeṇa praviśantaṁ jighāṁsayā

hatvā nyapātayat tena kapitthāni ca līlayā

TRANSLATION

Desiring to kill Kṛṣṇa, the demon Vatsa disguised himself as a calf and entered among Kṛṣṇa's calves. But Kṛṣṇa killed the demon and, using his body, enjoyed the sport of knocking kapittha fruits down from the trees.

|| 10.26.10 ||

hatvā rāsabha-daiteyaṁ tad-bandhūṁś ca balānvitaḥ

cakre tāla-vanaṁ kṣemaṁ paripakva-phalānvitam

TRANSLATION

Together with Lord Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa killed the jackass demon and all his friends, thereby securing the safety of the Tālavana forest, which abounded with fully ripened palm fruits.

COMMENTARY

Though Balarāma single-handedly killed Dhenukasura, the jackass (*rāsabha*) demon, in this verse it says that Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma killed him. This is to give prominence to Kṛṣṇa's activities.

|| 10.26.11 ||

pralambaṁ ghātayitvograṁ balena bala-śālinā

amocayad vraja-paśūn gopāṁś cāraṇya-vahnitaḥ

TRANSLATION

After arranging for the mighty Lord Balarāma to kill the terrible demon Pralamba, Kṛṣṇa saved Vraja's cowherd boys and their animals from a forest fire.

|| 10.26.12 ||

āśī-viṣatamāhīndraṁ damitvā vimadaṁ hradāt

prāsahyodvāsya yamunāṁ cakre 'sau nirviṣodakām

TRANSLATION

Kṛṣṇa chastised the most poisonous serpent, Kāliya, and after humbling him He drove him forcibly from the lake of the Yamunā. In this way the Lord made the water of that river free of the snake's powerful poison.

COMMENTARY

Here the cowherd men mean to say, "How could this little boy humble the most poisonous king of snakes so that he left the lake?"

|| 10.26.13 ||

dustyajaś cānurāgo 'smin sarveṣāṁ no vrajaukasām

nanda te tanaye 'smāsu tasyāpy autpattikaḥ katham

TRANSLATION

Dear Nanda, how is it that we and all the other residents of Vraja cannot give up our constant affection for your son? And how is it that He is so spontaneously attracted to us?

COMMENTARY

The wonderful activities of the child were given as evidence to prove that Kṛṣṇa is God. In this verse the cowherd men speak to show how they are all united in their devotional feelings towards Kṛṣṇa.

They said, "Though Kṛṣṇa is your child not ours, our loving affection (*anurāgaḥ*) toward Him is very strong. We have parental affection for Him, the boys have brotherly love for Him, and all the male and female birds and forest animals have strong affection for Kṛṣṇa too. In all cases that affection is increasing in newer ways at every moment. Our attraction is natural and we cannot give it up, even though we now see that Kṛṣṇa has the qualities of God."

"One has more affection for one's own body than wealth and children, and more affection for one's soul than one's body, and more affection for the Paramātmā than one's own soul. Thus Kṛṣṇa must be the Paramātmā. Otherwise such affection could not be possible if Kṛṣṇa were a mere human being."

Nanda Mahārāja replied, “But if you conclude that Kṛṣṇa is the Paramātmā, then how is it possible for Paramātmā to have such natural attraction towards the Vrajavāsīs and the animals of the forest? Being the self-satisfied Paramātmā, Kṛṣṇa should be indifferent to everything. How could He feel such constant love for us who are absorbed in material life?”

|| 10.26.14 ||

kva sapta-hāyano bālaḥ kva mahādri-vidhāraṇam

tato no jāyate śaṅkā vraja-nātha tavātmaje

TRANSLATION

On the one hand this boy is only seven years old, and on the other we see that He has lifted the great hill Govardhana. Therefore, O King of Vraja, a doubt about your son arises within us.

COMMENTARY

The cowherd men have already described Kṛṣṇa’s holding up Govardhana Hill. But they repeat the description again in this verse because of their astonishment.

|| 10.26.15 ||

śrī-nanda uvāca

śrūyatāṁ me vaco gopā vyetu śaṅkā ca vo ’rbhake

enam kumāram uddiśya gargo me yad uvāca ha

TRANSLATION

Nanda Mahārāja replied: O cowherd men, just hear my words and let all your doubts concerning my son be gone. Some time ago Garga Muni spoke to me as follows about this boy.

COMMENTARY

Nanda Mahārāja said, “I will relieve your doubts by reciting what I heard from Garga Muni. Due to my past pious activities, Lord Nārāyaṇa has entered my son to mercifully deliver me from danger.”

|| 10.26.16 ||

varṇās trayaḥ kilāsyāsan gṛhṇato 'nu-yugaṁ tanūḥ

śuklo raktas tathā pīta idānīṁ kṛṣṇatāṁ gataḥ

TRANSLATION

[Garga Muni had said:] Your son Kṛṣṇa appears as an incarnation in every millennium. In the past He assumed three different colors-white, red and yellow-and now He has appeared in a blackish color.

COMMENTARY

This and the next six verses (17 through 22) are taken from the eighth chapter of this canto, in which Garga Muni instructs Nanda Mahārāja about Nanda's son Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.26.17 ||

prāgayaṁ vasudevasya kvacij jātas tavātmajaḥ

vāsudeva iti śrīmān abhijñāḥ sampracakṣate

TRANSLATION

For many reasons, this beautiful son of yours sometimes appeared previously as the son of Vasudeva. Therefore, those who are learned sometimes call this child Vāsudeva.

|| 10.26.18 ||

bahūni santi nāmāni rūpāṇi ca sutasya te

guṇa -karmānurūpāṇi tāny ahaṁ veda no janāḥ

TRANSLATION

For this son of yours there are many forms and names according to His transcendental qualities and activities. These are known to me, but people in general do not understand them.

|| 10.26.19 ||

eṣa vaḥ śreya ādhāsyad gopa-gokula-nandanaḥ

anena sarva-durgāṇi yūyam añjas tariṣyatha

TRANSLATION

To increase the transcendental bliss of the cowherd men of Gokula, this child will always act auspiciously for you. And by His grace only, you will surpass all difficulties.

|| 10.26.20 ||

purānena vraja-pate sādhavo dasyu-pīḍitāḥ

arājake rakṣyamāṇā jigyur dasyūn samedhitāḥ

TRANSLATION

O Nanda Mahārāja, as recorded in history, when there was an irregular, incapable government, Indra having been dethroned, and when honest people were being harassed and disturbed by thieves, this child appeared in order to curb the rogues and to protect the people and enable them to flourish.

|| 10.26.21 ||

ya etasmin mahā-bhāge prītiṁ kurvanti mānavāḥ

nārayo 'bhibhavanty etān viṣṇu-pakṣān ivāsurāḥ

TRANSLATION

Demons cannot harm the demigods, who always have Lord Viṣṇu on their side. Similarly, any person or group attached to all-auspicious Kṛṣṇa cannot be defeated by enemies.

|| 10.26.22 ||

tasmān nanda kumāro 'yaṁ nārāyaṇa-samo guṇaiḥ

śriyā kīrtyānubhāvena tat-karmasu na vismayaḥ

TRANSLATION

Therefore, O Nanda Mahārāja, this child of yours is as good as Nārāyaṇa. In His transcendental qualities, opulence, name, fame and influence, He is exactly like Nārāyaṇa. Thus you should not be astonished by His activities.

COMMENTARY

Nanda Majaraja wished to remove their present realization of Kṛṣṇa's Godhood (*aiśvarya-jñāna*) and increase their understanding of Kṛṣṇa as their son, brother and friend. Therefore in repeating Garga's words Nanda Mahārāja does not say "your son" but "this boy" (*kumāra ayam*) so that the Vrajavāsīs would feel that Kṛṣṇa was not only his son but theirs as well. Though they had seen Kṛṣṇa's phenomenal powers, they should not give up their affection and should continue to give blessings to Him daily.

Nārāyaṇa-samah—as good as Nārāyaṇa means that Lord Nārāyaṇa's power had entered Kṛṣṇa, not that Kṛṣṇa was Nārāyaṇa. It is just like the *sūryakānta* stone which is called thus because of some likeness to the sun. The child was not God, not was Kṛṣṇa an ordinary human, but He was someone who could perform extraordinary deeds.

Nanda Mahārāja said, "This great personality has come as the ornament of our family lineage. Thus at the conclusion of his statement Garga said, 'You should not be bewildered by your son's activities.' Because of Kṛṣṇa's wonderful activities you should not think of Him as God. You should make Him the object of your compassion by blessing Him to live a long life, You should not be indifferent to Him."

Nanda Mahārāja then repeated Garga's statement, 'Protect Him well.' By removing the cowherd men's bewilderment, Nanda Mahārāja removed their doubts.

|| 10.26.23 ||

ity addhā māṁ samādiśya garge ca sva-gṛhaṁ gate

manye nārāyaṇasyāṁśaṁ kṛṣṇam akliṣṭa-kāriṇam

TRANSLATION

[Nanda Mahārāja continued:] After Garga Ṛṣi spoke these words to me and returned home, I began to consider that Kṛṣṇa, who keeps us free from trouble, is actually an expansion of Lord Nārāyaṇa.

COMMENTARY

Nanda Mahārāja continued, "I consider Kṛṣṇa, who removes our suffering, to be invested with Lord Nārāyaṇa's power (*nārāyaṇasya-aṁśam*)."

|| 10.26.24 ||

iti nanda-vacaḥ śrutvā garga-gītaṁ taṁ vrajaukasaḥ

muditā nandam ānarcuḥ kṛṣṇaṁ ca gata-vismayāḥ

TRANSLATION

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Having heard Nanda Mahārāja relate the statements of Garga Muni, the residents of Vṛndāvana became enlivened. Their perplexity was gone, and they worshiped Nanda and Lord Kṛṣṇa with great respect.

COMMENTARY

The Vrajavāsīs honored Nanda and Kṛṣṇa with love offerings of gold coins, cloth and jewels. Kṛṣṇa was playing in the forest when this conversation took place, so when He returned home the Vrajavāsīs encouraged Him by decorating Kṛṣṇa with beautiful yellow clothes, necklaces, armlets, earrings and crowns, and by shouting, "All glories, all glories to the jewel of Vrajabhūmi! May You live a long life!"

|| 10.26.25 ||

deve varṣati yajña-viplava-ruṣā vajrāsma-varṣānilaiḥ

sīdat-pāla-paśu-striy ātma-śaraṇaṁ dṛṣṭvānukampy utsmayan utpāṭyaika-kareṇa śailam abalo līlocchilīndhraṁ yathā

bibhrad goṣṭham apān mahendra-mada-bhit prīyān na indro gavām

TRANSLATION

Indra became angry when his sacrifice was disrupted, and thus he caused rain and hail to fall on Gokula, accompanied by lightning and powerful winds, all of

which brought great suffering to the cowherds, animals and women there. When Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is by nature always compassionate, saw the condition of those who had only Him as their shelter, He smiled broadly and lifted Govardhana Hill with one hand, just as a small child picks up a mushroom to play with it. Holding up the hill, He protected the cowherd community. May He, Govinda, the Lord of the cows and the destroyer of Indra's false pride, be pleased with us.

COMMENTARY

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said, "O King Parīkṣit! May that Kṛṣṇa who lifted Govardhana and protected the Vrajavāsīs from the disturbances caused by hunger, hail and rain arising from Indra's wrath, and who expertly initiated the worship of Govardhana to cut down the demigods' pride, be pleased with us. In the same way may He who protects you from the lightning bolt curse of Śṛṅgi's anger with the essence of the *Vedas* in the form of this *Bhāgavata*, who is expert at starting the sacrifice of listening to the *Bhāgavatam*, and who destroyed the pride of the *brāhmaṇas* devoid of *bhakti*, be pleased with us."

In this way, by praying for Kṛṣṇa's mercy Śukadeva Gosvāmī indicates that Mahārāja Parīkṣit should apply this to himself.

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said, "Becoming extremely angry over the stopping of his sacrifice, Indra caused torrential rain to inundate Vṛndāvana. Seeing that the animals, men and women who had taken shelter of Him alone were severely afflicted with the rain, hail, lightning and wind, Kṛṣṇa smiled slightly and effortlessly held Govardhana Hill aloft, like a child lifting a mushroom, to protect the land of Vṛndāvana. May "the Lord of the cows" (*indro gavām*), who destroyed Indra's false pride, be pleased with you, me and all the assembled listeners."

Thus ends the commentary on the Twenty Sixth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Twenty-seven

Lord Indra and Mother Surabhi Offer Prayers

|| 10.27.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

govardhane dhṛte śaile āsārād rakṣite vraje

go-lokād āvrajat kṛṣṇaṁ surabhiḥ śakra eva ca

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: After Kṛṣṇa had lifted Govardhana Hill and thus protected the inhabitants of Vraja from the terrible rainfall, Surabhi, the mother of the cows, came from her planet to see Kṛṣṇa. She was accompanied by Indra.

COMMENTARY

This chapter describes the prayers Indra recited out of fear, Kṛṣṇa's mercy on him, and how the Surabhi cow and Indra performed a bathing ceremony for Kṛṣṇa on account of which the Lord is called Govinda.

Seeing that Vraja had been protected from the rain, Indra, nervous and ashamed, fearfully approached Kṛṣṇa. The Surabhi cow came on the order of Brahmā to help Indra and bathe Kṛṣṇa. The word *go-lokāt* here indicates the material planet called Goloka which is filled with exceptional cows. Kṛṣṇa's transcendental Surabhi cows from Vraja Gokula could not be with Indra in the material world.

|| 10.27.2 ||

vivikta upasaṅgamya vrīḍītaḥ kṛta-helanaḥ

pasparśa pādayor enaṁ kirīṭenārka-varcasā

TRANSLATION

Indra was very ashamed of having offended the Lord. Approaching Him in a solitary place, Indra fell down and lay his helmet, whose effulgence was as brilliant as the sun, upon the Lord's lotus feet.

COMMENTARY

One morning Kṛṣṇa went alone to see to what extent the lightning bolts of Indra had broken the back of Govardhana. This gave Indra an opportunity to meet Kṛṣṇa in a solitary place (*vivikta*). The specific "solitary place" where Indra approached Śrī Kṛṣṇa is mentioned by the sage Śri Vaiśampāyana in the *Hari-vaṁśa* (*Viṣṇu-parva* 19.3): *sa dadarśopaviṣṭaṁ vai govardhana-śilā-tale*. "Indra saw Kṛṣṇa sitting at the base of Govardhana Hill."

Surabhi had sent Indra with a suggestion: "Go alone without your elephant carrier, and in a humble mood offer obeisances at Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet to get relieved from your offense."

By His glance Kṛṣṇa said, "O king of the demigods! I see that you have unprecedented affection for Me. You have come to show mercy to Me, who have offended you by stopping your worship." Thus Indra became ashamed (*vrīḍītaḥ*).

|| 10.27.3 ||

dṛṣṭa-śrutānubhāvo 'sya kṛṣṇasyāmita-tejasaḥ

naṣṭa-tri-lokeśa-mada idam āha kṛtāñjaliḥ

TRANSLATION

Indra had now heard of and seen the transcendental power of omnipotent Kṛṣṇa, and his false pride in being the lord of the three worlds was thus defeated. Holding his hands together in supplication, he addressed the Lord as follows.

COMMENTARY

First with his own eyes Indra saw the powers of Kṛṣṇa. Later, having understood his offense and desiring to alleviate it, Indra went to Mount Meru, where he heard about Kṛṣṇa's powers from Lord Brahmā.

|| 10.27.4 ||

indra uvāca

viśuddha-sattvaṁ tava dhāma śāntaṁ tapo-mayaṁ dhvasta-rajas-tamaskam

māyā-mayo 'yaṁ guṇa-sampravāho na vidyate te grahaṇānubandhaḥ

TRANSLATION

King Indra said: Your transcendental form, a manifestation of pure goodness, is undisturbed by change, shining with knowledge and devoid of passion and ignorance. In You does not exist the mighty flow of the modes of material nature, which is based on illusion and ignorance.

COMMENTARY

"You know that I was so foolish that I stopped your worship, and on the pretext of worshiping Govardhana I enjoyed the offerings meant for you." Fearing such words from Kṛṣṇa, Indra said: "Oh Lord, though I am bewildered by Your *māyā*, I now know a little about You by a speck of Your mercy." This is the intention of this and the next verse.

King Indra said, "Your transcendental form (*dhāma*) is undisturbed and ever peaceful (*śāntaṁ*). It is full of pure knowledge (*tapo-mayam*). Does it arise from *sattva-guṇa*? No, Your form is *visuddha-sattva*, transcendental goodness, *cid-ānanda-maya*. Therefore You are totally free from the modes passion and ignorance (*raja-tamo guṇa*). Moreover,

people can destroy the effects of passion and ignorance (*dvasta raja tamaskam*) simply by remembering Your beautiful transcendental form.

"Though You are not the least bit influenced by the modes of nature like the conditioned souls, sometimes for amusement You accept a role in this world. Someone may object, 'But isn't that a fault?' No, it is not a fault because You have no desire to accept any relation with the material realm."

|| 10.27.5 ||

kuto nu tad-dhetava īśa tat-kṛtā lobhādayo ye 'budha-linga-bhāvāḥ

tathāpi daṇḍaṁ bhagavān bibharti dharmasya guptyai khala-nigrahāya

TRANSLATION

How, then, could there exist in You the symptoms of an ignorant person—such as greed, lust, anger and envy—which are produced by one's previous involvement in material existence and which cause one to become further entangled in material existence? And yet as the Supreme Lord You impose punishment to protect religious principles and curb down the wicked.

COMMENTARY

Indra said, "O Lord! If You have no desire to accept the modes of nature, how do their effects such as greed and anger appear within You? How could You stop my worship without the influence of the modes of nature? And without showing greed and anger, how could You punish the wicked to protect the principles of religion (*dharmasya*)?"

|| 10.27.6 ||

pitā gurus tvaṁ jagatām adhīśo duratyayaḥ kāla upātta-daṇḍaḥ

hitāya cecchā-tanubhiḥ samīhase mānaṁ vidhunvan jagad-īśa-māninām

TRANSLATION

You are the father and spiritual master of this entire universe, and also its supreme controller. You are insurmountable time, imposing punishment upon the sinful for their own benefit. Indeed, in Your various incarnations, selected by Your own free will, You act decisively to remove the false pride of those who presume themselves masters of this world.

COMMENTARY

Indra said, “As the Supreme Lord, You are complete, so what purpose do You have in protecting *dharma* by punishing the evil? It is for the auspiciousness of the universe. Due to Your merciful nature, You show affection to those who follow *dharma*, just as the father favors his son and the *guru* his disciple. As *adhīśa* (Supreme Controller), You are fully capable of delivering everyone from suffering and bestowing happiness. But for the evil people, You are insurmountable time, which purifies them through punishment.”

“To benefit both the pious and impious You appear in various incarnations and perform pastimes according to Your own free will (*icchā-tanubhih*). Your pastimes include killing demons like Pūtanā and protecting the devotees. It is also Your pastime to deflate the pride of Your devotees such as Brahmā who become intoxicated with the minute power delegated to them by You.”

|| 10.27.7 ||

ye mad-vidhājñā jagad-īśa-māninas tvāṁ vīkṣya kāle ’bhayam āśu tan-madam

hitvārya-mārgaṁ prabhajanty apasmayā īhā khalānām api te ’nuśāsanam

TRANSLATION

Even fools like me, who proudly think themselves universal lords, quickly give up their conceit and directly take to the path of the spiritually progressive when they see You are fearless even in the face of time. Thus You punish the mischievous only to instruct them.

COMMENTARY

“Among those who think themselves lords, I am the lowest.” Indra speaks in this mood. *Mad-vidhājñā* indicates that Indra is the most foolish of the foolish. The comparison (*mad-vidha*-like me) indicates the extreme, as in the example of a face as beautiful as the moon (the moon indicates most beautiful).

Indra continued, “Seeing that You are fearless in the face of time, I give up my false identity as a controller.” Or the meaning can be: “Not knowing what kind of punishment I will get, I give up my false identity out of fear of You.”

“Giving up our pride (*apasmayā*), we fully take to (*prabhajanti*) the path (*ārya-mārga*) of Your devotees. Therefore, this pastime of lifting Govardhana is Your punishment (*anuśāsanam*) for me.”

|| 10.27.8 ||

sa tvaṁ mamaiśvarya-mada-plutasya
kṛtāgasas te 'viduṣaḥ prabhāvam

kṣantuṁ prabho 'thārhasi mūḍha-cetaso
maivaṁ punar bhūn matir īśa me 'satī

TRANSLATION

Engrossed in pride over my ruling power, ignorant of Your majesty, I offended You. O Lord, may You forgive me. My intelligence was bewildered, but let my consciousness never again be so impure.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa might have replied, "I lifted Govardhana Hill to protect Vraja, not to punish you. Now I will call Yamarāja and arrange for your punishment." Afraid of such a reply, Indra fearfully said, "As the most famous father and *guru*, You are merciful by nature. Therefore, please forgive the offense of this foolish person immersed in pride and ignorant (*aviduṣaḥ*) of Your majesty. You should not purify me by punishment, because I am like a stubborn animal. The moment after the master beats the animal, it again commits the same offense. Instead You should purify me by Your mercy so that my animalistic tendencies do not arise again."

This prayer is not offered with a completely pure heart, because Indra is exhibiting humility in order to save himself. Indra mentions this in the seventh verse. Later in the tenth canto we find that when Śrī Kṛṣṇa once took a *pārijāta* flower from heaven, foolish Indra again reacted violently against the Lord.

|| 10.27.9 ||

tavāvatāro 'yam adhokṣajeha bhuvo bharāṇām uru-bhāra-janmanām

camū-patīnām abhavāya deva bhavāya yuṣmac-caraṇānuvartinām

TRANSLATION

You descend into this world, O transcendent Lord, to destroy the warlords who burden the earth and create many terrible disturbances. O Lord, you simultaneously act for the welfare of those who faithfully serve Your lotus feet.

COMMENTARY

Indra said, “You have appeared in this world for our benefit because of our prayers. Even knowing this I have been blind and acted foolishly. Now, having been punished, I can see the truth. You descend to destroy the demoniac warlords who harass the earth, and to bring prosperity to those who faithfully serve Your lotus feet. But I am neither of these, so You neither destroy me nor bless me. Alas! It is my great misfortune that You remain neutral towards me.”

|| 10.27.10 ||

namas tubhyaṁ bhagavate puruṣāya mahātmane

vāsudevāya kṛṣṇāya sātvatāṁ pataye namaḥ

TRANSLATION

Obeisances unto You, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the great Soul, who are all-pervading and who reside in the hearts of all. My obeisances unto You, Kṛṣṇa, the chief of the Yadu dynasty.

COMMENTARY

Indra said, “Therefore let me just surrender to Your lotus feet and offer You respects.” This is expressed in two verses. Uddhava says: “Kṛṣṇa, the primeval Lord and master of matter and spirit, appears in this world in different *avatāras* as portions of Mahāviṣṇu, who is also His part.” Therefore in this verse Indra pays respects to all the expanded forms which are within Kṛṣṇa when He appears on earth. “I pay my respects to Lord Nārāyaṇa (*bhagavate*) of Mahāvaikuṇṭha. I pay my respects to Mahā-viṣṇu (*puruṣāya*), creator of the *mahat-tattva*. I pay my respects to Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, the Supersoul of the total universe (*samaṣṭi-paramātmā, mahātmane*).”

After paying respects to the plenary portions of Kṛṣṇa (*aṁśas*), Indra pays respects to the *aṁśī*, the source of the *aṁśas*. “I offer respects to Vāsudeva, the son of Vasudeva. I offer respects to Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the Yadu dynasty (*sātvatās*).”

|| 10.27.11 ||

svacchandopātta-dehāya viśuddha-jñāna-mūrtaye

sarvasmai sarva-bījāya sarva-bhūtātmane namaḥ

TRANSLATION

Unto Him who assumes transcendental bodies according to the desires of His devotees, unto Him whose form is itself pure consci-ousness, unto Him who is

everything, who is the seed of everything and who is the Soul of all creatures, I offer my obeisances.

COMMENTARY

Indra said, “I pay respects to You who accepts bodies in order to give happiness to Your *premi-bhaktas* who serve You in the sacred raptures of *dāsya, sakhya, vātsalya* and *śṛṅgāra*. Being non-material, Your transcendental body is completely pure consciousness, without a tinge of illusion. You possess unlimited multifarious energies such as *mahāmāyā*. You are everything (*sarva*): You are the seed (*sarva-bīja*) of everything and the Soul of every creature. Thus I pay respects to You.”

|| 10.27.12 ||

mayedaṁ bhagavān goṣṭha-nāśāyāsāra-vāyubhiḥ

ceṣṭitaṁ vihate yajñe māninā tīvra-manyunā

TRANSLATION

My dear Lord, when my sacrifice was disrupted I became fiercely angry because of false pride. Thus I tried to destroy Your cowherd community with severe rain and wind.

COMMENTARY

“O Indra, I can understand from your recitation of praises that you are My devotee. But without your sanction, the wicked Sāṁvartaka clouds attacked My Vraja. Therefore you should punish them.”

Fearing such an innocent scolding from Kṛṣṇa, Indra thought, “Alas! I cannot be duplicitous with the all-knowing Supersoul.” Therefore in this verse Indra decided to confess that everything was his fault.

Kṛṣṇa and Indra might have had the following conversation:

Kṛṣṇa: “But Indra, how is it possible for My devotee to do this?”

Indra: “I became angry when my worship was stopped.”

Kṛṣṇa: “Though I am Your master and I stopped Your worship, I cannot believe that my servant would do such a thing.”

Indra: “Anything is possible for one who is falsely proud (*mānina*).”

Kṛṣṇa: “Though pride may somehow arise in My devotee, he will remove it with intelligence.”

Indra: “But intense anger (*tīvra-manyunā*) destroys all one’s intelligence.”

|| 10.27.13 ||

tvayeśānugṛhīto ’smi dhvasta-stambho vṛthodyamaḥ

īśvaraṁ gurum ātmānaṁ tvām ahaṁ śaraṇaṁ gataḥ

TRANSLATION

O Lord, You have shown mercy to me by shattering my false pride and defeating my attempt [to punish Vṛndāvana]. To You, the Supreme Lord, spiritual master and Supreme Soul, I have now come for shelter.

COMMENTARY

Indra said, “Though I have caused great disturbance to Vraja, I have received Your mercy, like a sick person being diagnosed and given medicine by a doctor. Thus cured of my disease, I have given up the urge to release my lightning bolts. Because You control everything, You are the Supreme Lord (*īśvaram*). Because You give benefit to everyone, You are the spiritual master (*gurum*). Because You are the supreme object of love, You are the Supreme Soul (*ātmānaṁ*).”

|| 10.27.14 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

evaṁ saṅkīrtitaḥ kṛṣṇo maghonā bhagavān amum

megha-gambhīrayā vācā prahasann idam abravīt

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus glorified by Indra, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, smiled and then spoke to him as follows in a voice resonant like the clouds.

|| 10.27.15 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

mayā te 'kāri maghavan makha-bhaṅgo 'nugṛhṇatā

mad-anusmṛtaye nityaṁ mattasyendra-śriyā bhṛśam

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: My dear Indra, it was out of mercy that I stopped the sacrifice meant for you. You were greatly intoxicated by your opulence as King of heaven, and I wanted you to always remember Me.

COMMENTARY

Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Indra are herein having a heart-to-heart talk. Indra sincerely revealed his mind to the Lord, and now Kṛṣṇa similarly reveals His own purpose.

|| 10.27.16 ||

mām aiśvarya-śrī-madāndho daṇḍa pāṇiṁ na paśyati

taṁ bhraṁśayāmi sampadbhyo yasya cecchāmy anugraham

TRANSLATION

A man blinded by intoxication with his power and opulence cannot see Me nearby with the rod of punishment in My hand. If I desire his real welfare, I drag him down from his materially fortunate position.

|| 10.27.17 ||

gamyatāṁ śakra bhadraṁ vaḥ kriyatāṁ me ’nuśāsanam

sthīyatāṁ svādhikāreṣu yuktair vaḥ stambha-varjitaiḥ

TRANSLATION

Indra, you may now go. Execute My order and remain in your ap-pointed position as King of heaven. But be sober, without false pride.

COMMENTARY

Though Indra was alone, Kṛṣṇa here addresses him in the plural form (*vaḥ*) because this grave instruction was meant to be a lesson for all the demigods like Varuṇa, who is mentioned in the next chapter.

Kṛṣṇa said, “Continue in your position, but remain sober (*yuktaḥ*) and without false pride. Otherwise, I will punish you again.” Śrī Kṛṣṇa did not promise here that Indra would not be afflicted by pride again. Later to carry out Kṛṣṇa’s pastime of stealing Indra’s *pārijāta* flower, it was necessary for Indra to show pride.

|| 10.27.18 ||

athāha surabhiḥ kṛṣṇam abhivandya manasvinī

sva-santānair upāmantrya gopa-rūpiṇam īśvaram

TRANSLATION

Mother Surabhi, along with her progeny, the cows, then offered her obeisances to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Respectfully requesting His attention, the gentle lady addressed the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who was present before her as a cowherd boy.

COMMENTARY

The heavenly cow Surabhi affectionately thought of the spiritual cows of Vraja as her own offspring (*sva-santānaiḥ*), though they were offspring of the transcendental cows that play with Kṛṣṇa. Similarly, though Śrī Kṛṣṇa actually comes from the dynasty of the spiritual moon (*Candra-vaṁśa*), the material moon often thinks of Kṛṣṇa as his offspring. Surabhi, along with the cows of Vraja, respectfully begged Kṛṣṇa for His attention (*upāmantrya*) and offered the following prayers.

|| 10.27.19 ||

surabhir uvāca

kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa mahā-yogin viśvātman viśva-sambhava

bhavatā loka-nāthena sa-nāthā vayam acyuta

TRANSLATION

Mother Surabhi said: O Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, greatest of mystics! O Soul and origin of the universe! You are the master of the world, and by Your grace, O infallible Lord, we have You as our master.

COMMENTARY

Mother Surabhi is feeling great ecstasy so she repeats the words "Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa." Surabhi said, "You are called the greatest of *yogīs* (*mahā-yogin*) because You protected my offspring by lifting Govardhana Hill with Your mystic powers. We accept You as our master, whereas our so-called master, Indra, had tried to kill them."

|| 10.27.20 ||

tvaṁ naḥ paramakaṁ daivaṁ tvaṁ na indro jagat-pate

bhavāya bhava go-vipra devānāṁ ye ca sādhavaḥ

TRANSLATION

You are our worshipable Deity. Therefore, O Lord of the universe, for the benefit of the cows, the brāhmaṇas, the demigods and all other saintly persons, please become our Indra.

COMMENTARY

Surabhi said, "You are our worshipable Lord (*daivaṁ*) who gives supreme happiness (*parama ka*). Though You have appeared in a family of cowherd men, You are the master of the universe (*jagat-pate*). You stopped the sacrifice to Indra and easily defeated him. Therefore You are qualified to be our Indra."

|| 10.27.21 ||

indraṁ nas tvābhiṣekṣyāmo brahmāṇā coditā vayam

avatīrṇo 'si viśvātman bhūmer bhārāpanuttaye

TRANSLATION

As ordered by Lord Brahmā, we shall perform Your bathing ceremony to coronate You as Indra. O Soul of the universe, You descend to this world to relieve the burden of the earth.

COMMENTARY

Surabhi said, "As You are our Indra, we will install You in the role of Indra with an *abhiṣeka*."

Kṛṣṇa said, "By whose order do you want to do this? Is it some independent desire?"

Surabhi: "It has been ordered by Brahmā. When Indra was afflicted with fear, he went to Brahmā to explain everything about Your *govardhana-līlā*. Brahmā felt somewhat fearful upon remembering his previous offense to You, so he gave me this order: 'O Surabhi! You are very dear to the Lord, the protector of your relatives. Therefore you should go to Kṛṣṇa, the ocean of mercy, get Indra forgiven for his offense, perform an *abhiseka*, and install Kṛṣṇa as the king (Indra) of the cows."

"You may ask what is the benefit of an *abhiṣeka* to You, whose rarely attained lotus feet are served by Brahmā and Śiva, and who is the Indra (king) of billions of universes? We want to do this for our own purification. Although You are the invisible Soul of the universe, You appear to relieve the burden of the earth. If You did not appear, how would we ever become fortunate?"

|| 10.27.22-23 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

evaṁ kṛṣṇam upāmantrya surabhiḥ payasātmanaḥ

jalair ākāśa-gaṅgāyā airāvata-karoddhṛtaiḥ

indraḥ surarṣibhiḥ sākaṁ codito deva-mātṛbhiḥ

abhyasiñcata dāśārhaṁ govinda iti cābhyadhāt

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having thus appealed to Lord Kṛṣṇa, mother Surabhi performed His bathing ceremony with her own milk, and Indra, ordered by Aditi and other mothers of the demigods, anointed the Lord with heavenly Gaṅgā water from the trunk of Indra's elephant carrier, Airāvata. Thus, in the company of the demigods and great sages, Indra coronated Lord Kṛṣṇa, the descendant of Daśārha, and gave Him the name Govinda.

COMMENTARY

After praying to Kṛṣṇa to accept the post of Indra, Surabhi bathed the Lord with her milk. Because Indra was embarrassed by his blunder of attacking Vṛndāvana, he was reluctant to worship Kṛṣṇa. However, after receiving encouragement from Aditi and the other heavenly mothers, lndra felt authorized and then bathed Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Though Kṛṣṇa had appeared in the Daśārha dynasty, because He had a greater desire to be a cowherd, they named Him Govinda. *Go* means cows and *vinda* means to protect. *Go* can also mean Svarga (heaven). Therefore, Govinda can mean one who enjoys the position of Indra. Go also means the senses. Govinda then means one who protects or nourishes (*vind*) the devotees by attracting their senses.

|| 10.27.24 ||

tatrāgatās tumburu-nāradādayo gandharva-vidyādhara-siddha-cāraṇāḥ

jagur yaśo loka-malāpahaṁ hareḥ surāṅganāḥ sannanṛtur mudānvitāḥ

TRANSLATION

Tumburu, Nārada and other Gandharvas, along with the Vidyādharas, Siddhas and Cāraṇas, came there to sing the glories of Lord Hari, which purify the entire world. And the wives of the demigods, filled with joy, danced together in the Lord's honor.

|| 10.27.25 ||

taṁ tuṣṭuvur deva-nikāya-ketavo hy avākiraṁś cādbhuta-puṣpa-vṛṣṭibhiḥ

lokāḥ parāṁ nirvṛtim āpnuvaṁs trayo gāvas tadā gām anayan payo-drutām

TRANSLATION

The most eminent demigods chanted the praises of the Lord and scattered wonderful showers of flowers all around Him. All three worlds felt supreme satisfaction, and the cows drenched the surface of the earth with their milk.

COMMENTARY

The chief demigods (*deva nikāya ketava*) such as Varuṇa praised Govinda and covered Him with an amazing shower of multicolored, fragrant flowers. The cows moistened the earth with their milk.

|| 10.27.26 ||

nānā-rāsaughāḥ sarito vṛkṣā āsan madhu-sravāḥ

akṛṣṭa-pacyauṣadhayo girayo 'bibhran un maṇīn

TRANSLATION

Rivers flowed with various kinds of tasty liquids, trees exuded honey, edible plants came to maturity without cultivation, and hills gave forth jewels formerly hidden in their interiors.

COMMENTARY

The rivers flowed with various tasty liquids such as milk. Without cultivation, the plants yielded mature grains and ripened fruits. The surfaces of the mountains manifested an array of excellent jewels.

|| 10.27.27 ||

kṛṣṇe 'bhiṣikta etāni sarvāṇi kuru-nandana

nirvairāṇy abhavaṁs tāta krūrāṇy api nisargataḥ

TRANSLATION

O Parīkṣit, beloved of the Kuru dynasty, upon the ceremonial bathing of Lord Kṛṣṇa, all living creatures, even those cruel by nature, became entirely free of enmity.

COMMENTARY

After Kṛṣṇa's *abhiṣeka* ceremony all living entities gave up their natural animosities towards each other and became friends.

|| 10.27.28 ||

iti go-gokula-patiṁ govindam abhiṣicya saḥ

anujñāto yayau śakro vṛto devādibhir divam

TRANSLATION

After he had ceremonially bathed Lord Govinda, who is the master of the cows and the cowherd community, King Indra took the Lord's permission and, surrounded by the demigods and other higher beings, returned to his heavenly abode.

Thus ends the commentary on the Twenty Seventh Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Twenty-eight

Kṛṣṇa Rescues Nanda Mahārāja

|| 10.28.1 ||

śrī-bādarāyaṇir uvāca

ekādaśyāṁ nirāhāraḥ samabhyarcya janārdanam

snātuṁ nandas tu kālindyāṁ dvādaśyāṁ jalam āviśat

TRANSLATION

Śrī Bādarāyaṇi said: Having worshiped Lord Janārdana and fasted on the Ekādaśī day, Nanda Mahārāja entered the water of the Kālindī on the Dvādaśī to take his bath.

COMMENTARY

This chapter describes Varuṇa's kidnapping of Nanda and his prayers to Kṛṣṇa. Hearing about this incident from Nanda Mahārāja, the cowherd men became very surprised. Kṛṣṇa then showed them Goloka Vṛndāvana in the spiritual world. Śukadeva Gosvāmī tells this pastime of Kṛṣṇa forgiving Varuṇa for his offense because he remembered it while narrating the story of Kṛṣṇa forgiving Indra.

|| 10.28.2 ||

taṁ gṛhītvānayad bhṛtyo varuṇasyāsuro 'ntikam

avajñāyāsurīṁ velāṁ praviṣṭam udakaṁ niśi

TRANSLATION

Because Nanda Mahārāja entered the water in the dark of night, disregarding that the time was inauspicious, a demoniac servant of Varuṇa seized him and brought him to his master.

COMMENTARY

The servant of Varuṇa who arrested Nanda Mahārāja is stated here to be a demon for several reasons. First, the servant was foolishly ignorant of Nanda Mahārāja's position as the pastime father of the Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Absolute Truth. Also, Nanda Mahārāja's intention was to carry out the injunctions of scripture regarding breaking his Ekādaśī fast. Therefore, Varuṇa's servant should not have arrested Nanda on the technical grounds that he bathed in the Yamunā at an inauspicious time. Later in this chapter Varuṇa himself will say, *ajānatā māmakena mūḍhena*: "This was done by my ignorant servant, who is a fool."

|| 10.28.3 ||

cukruśus tam apaśyantaḥ kṛṣṇa rāmeti gopakāḥ

bhagavāṁs tad upaśrutya pitaraṁ varuṇāhṛtam

tad-antikaṁ gato rājan svānām abhaya-do vibhuḥ

TRANSLATION

O King, not seeing Nanda Mahārāja, the cowherd men loudly cried out, "O Kṛṣṇa! O Rāma!" Lord Kṛṣṇa heard their cries and understood that His father had been captured by Varuṇa. Therefore the almighty Lord, who makes His devotees fearless, went to the court of Varuṇadeva.

COMMENTARY

Several cowherd men accompanied Nanda Mahārāja as guards when he went to take his bath at night. When Nanda did not come out of the water, they began to cry out. Though Kṛṣṇa was far away sleeping on His bed of flowers, He heard the cowherd men shouting "Kṛṣṇa! Rāma!"

The word *upa-śrutya* indicates that Kṛṣṇa heard from close by. Because Kṛṣṇa is all-pervading, He is always very near to everyone. Understanding the situation, Kṛṣṇa rushed there, jumped into the water and went to the court of Varuṇa. Kṛṣṇa was determined to free His father and the other cowherd men from the fear of a mere demigod. Kṛṣṇa is called *svānām-abhaya-dah*, "relieving the fear of His associates"

because by freeing Nanda from Varuṇa's clutches, Kṛṣṇa relieved the fear of His relatives.

|| 10.28.4 ||

prāptaṁ vīkṣya hṛṣīkeśaṁ loka-pālaḥ saparyayā

mahatyā pūjayitvāha tad-darśana-mahotsavaḥ

TRANSLATION

Seeing that the Lord, Hṛṣīkeśa, had arrived, the demigod Varuṇa worshiped Him with elaborate offerings. Varuṇa was in a state of great jubilation upon seeing the Lord, and he spoke as follows.

|| 10.28.5 ||

śrī-varuṇa uvāca

adya me nibhṛto deho 'dyaivārtho 'dhigataḥ prabho

tvat-pāda-bhājo bhagavann avāpuḥ pāram adhvanaḥ

TRANSLATION

Śrī Varuṇa said: Now my body has fulfilled its function. Indeed, now the goal of my life is achieved, O Lord. Those who accept Your lotus feet, O Personality of Godhead, can transcend the path of material existence.

COMMENTARY

Varuṇa said, "All the thousands of bodies which I have received till now have been useless because in all those lives I did not see You. Today my body has become successful." That is the indication of the word *nibhṛtaḥ* which comes from *ni* for *nitaram* (complete, successful) and *bhṛtaḥ* (accepting a body).

Varuṇa said, "Today I have understood what is most valuable. Though I possess all varieties of jewels, until now I have not obtained such a jewel as You. Those who worship Your lotus feet can cross the ocean (*adhvan*: path) of material existence. How fortunate I am to attain Your *darśana* without any effort."

|| 10.28.6 ||

namas tubhyaṁ bhagavate brahmāṇe paramātmane

na yatra śrūyate māyā loka-sṛṣṭi-vikalpanā

TRANSLATION

My obeisances unto You, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Soul, within whom there is no trace of the illusory energy, which orchestrates the creation of this world.

COMMENTARY

Varuṇa said, "You are approached by the three paths of bhakti, *jñāna* and *yoga*. I pay my respects to You as Bhagavān, Brahman and Paramātmā. Those who claim that these realizations are tinged with *māyā* are wrong. These realizations are not touched by *māyā*, which makes the various things of this world (*loka-sṛṣṭi-vikalpanā*)."

|| 10.28.7 ||

ajānatā māmakena mūḍhenākārya-vedinā

ānīto 'yaṁ tava pitā tad bhavān kṣantum arhati

TRANSLATION

Your father, who is sitting here, was brought to me by a foolish, ignorant servant of mine who did not understand his proper duty. Therefore, please forgive us.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, "Why are you embarrassing Me by praising Me like this?"

In answer Varuṇa says, "I have really offended You." With this mood he speaks this verse.

Varuṇa continued, “According to the *bhakti-śāstras*, one can enter the water before sunrise after an especially short Ekādasī. Not knowing this (*akārya-vedinā*), one of my foolish servants committed a great offense by bringing Your father here. The offense of my servant is also mine.”

Pointing with his hand, Varuṇa showed Nanda seated on a jeweled throne, which Varuṇa himself had offered in order to worship Nanda Mahārāja, who was internally engaged in remembering Kṛṣṇa, his own worshipable deity.

Varuṇa continued, “O Kṛṣṇa! You are the ocean of forgiveness, but because I am the ocean of offense, You can punish me suitably if You wish.”

|| 10.28.8 ||

mamāpy anugrahaṁ kṛṣṇa kartum arhasy aśeṣa-dṛk

govinda nīyatām eṣa pitā te pitṛ-vatsala

TRANSLATION

O Kṛṣṇa, O seer of everything, please give Your mercy even to me. O Govinda, You are most affectionate to Your father. Please take him home.

|| 10.28.9 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

evaṁ prasāditaḥ kṛṣṇo bhagavān īśvareśvaraḥ

ādāyāgāt sva-pitaraṁ bandhūnāṁ cāvahan mudam

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus satisfied by Lord Varuṇa, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord of lords, took His father and returned home, where their relatives were overjoyed to see them.

COMMENTARY

It is understood that Kṛṣṇa returned home with Nanda Mahārāja before sunrise.

|| 10.28.10 ||

nandas tv atīndriyaṁ dṛṣṭvā loka-pāla-mahodayam

kṛṣṇe ca sannatiṁ teṣāṁ jñātibhyo vismito 'bravīt

TRANSLATION

Nanda Mahārāja had been astonished to see for the first time the great opulence of Varuṇa, the ruler of the ocean planet, and also to see how Varuṇa and his servants had offered such humble respect to Kṛṣṇa. Nanda described all this to his fellow cowherd men.

COMMENTARY

Nanda Mahārāja was astonished to see for the first time the fabulous opulence (*mahodayam*) of Varuṇa, the ruler of the ocean planet (*loka-pāla*). The word *teṣām* is plural in number to indicate that Varuṇa and his followers were offering obeisances to Kṛṣṇa. After breaking the fast at the proper time, Nanda Mahārāja sat comfortably and spoke to his friends and relatives (*jñātibhyaḥ*).

|| 10.28.11 ||

te cautsukya-dhiyo rājan matvā gopās tam īśvaram

api naḥ sva-gatiṁ sūkṣmām upādhāsyad adhīśvaraḥ

TRANSLATION

[Hearing about Kṛṣṇa's pastimes with Varuṇa,] the cowherd men considered that Kṛṣṇa must be the Supreme Lord, and their minds, O King, were filled with eagerness. They thought, "Will the Supreme Lord bestow upon us His transcendental abode?"

COMMENTARY

Realizing that they were in fact dealing with the Supreme Lord, the cowherd men became eager to know if Śrī Kṛṣṇa would take them to His own transcendental abode (*sva-gatiṁ*), Vaikuṇṭha.

The cowherd men said, "O Nanda! Previously you told us that Garga Muni had said that Kṛṣṇa was like Nārāyaṇa but not identical to Nārāyaṇa. But now you have concluded

that Kṛṣṇa is God by directly hearing Varuṇa praising Him. We think your son Kṛṣṇa should fulfill the desires of your friends in this material world, because, besides being the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa is also the son of our brother, the son of our sister, and the son of our daughter. We love Kṛṣṇa and He loves us."

Kṛṣṇa said, "O cowherd men! Please take whatever you desire from the Supreme Lord."

One cowherd man said, "We should take liberation."

Another said, "Let us become residents of Vaikuṇṭha."

Every cowherd man had a different desire. Although the cowherd men were seeing Kṛṣṇa as God, it did not even slightly diminish the intimacy of their relationship with Him. However, that was not the case with Kṛṣṇa's father Vasudeva and His friend Arjuna whose affectionate relationship was disrupted by observing Kṛṣṇa's majesty (*aiśvarya*). Once upon meeting Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, Vasudeva said, "You two are not my sons, but the Supreme Lord. Today, I surrender to Your lotus feet." After seeing Kṛṣṇa's universal form, Arjuna said, "O my Lord! Please forgive me for whatever I spoke, thinking of You as a friend."

|| 10.28.12 ||

iti svānāṁ sa bhagavān vijñāyākhila-dṛk svayam

saṅkalpa-siddhaye teṣāṁ kṛpayaitad acintayat

TRANSLATION

Because He sees everything, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, automatically understood what the cowherd men were conjecturing. Wanting to show His compassion to them by fulfilling their desires, the Lord thought as follows.

COMMENTARY

Understanding the minds of His relatives (*svānāṁ*), Kṛṣṇa thought how to fulfill their desires, since He knew about all the types of bliss available in Brahman, Vaikuṇṭha and Vrajabhūmi (*akhila-dṛk*). According to the degree of His devotees' prema, Kṛṣṇa usually covers or forgets His majesty, but in this case His *līlā-śakti* inspired Him with full awareness of all His majestic forms simultaneously.

Kṛṣṇa thought, “Because of tasting the rich sweetness of *kṛṣṇa-prema* these cowherd men have understood that the attainment of Brahman and Vaikuṇṭha are insignificant. Nevertheless, I will permit them to realize the bliss of Brahman and Vaikuṇṭha in order to fulfill the desires they are manifesting while playing the roles of unintelligent human beings.”

|| 10.28.13 ||

jano vai loka etasminn avidyā-kāma-karmabhiḥ

uccāvacāsu gatiṣu na veda svāṁ gatiṁ bhraman

TRANSLATION

[Lord Kṛṣṇa thought:] Certainly people in this world are wandering among higher and lower destinations, which they achieve through activities performed according to their desires and without full knowledge. Thus people do not know their real destination.

COMMENTARY

Although it appears to refer to conditioned souls, this verse actually applies to the eternally liberated residents of Śrī Vṛndāvana.

Kṛṣṇa thought, “All the desires and actions (*kāma-karmabhiḥ*) of My father and the Vrajavāsīs are solely dedicated for My pleasure. Seeing Me as their helpless child, they are completely unaware (*avidya*) that I am the Supreme God of all the universes. Wandering (*bhraman*) in this land of Vṛndāvana, they have no knowledge of the higher destinations. In this way, the Vrajavāsīs are completely unaware of their own exalted positions as My eternal associates in Śrī Vṛndāvana dhāma (*svāṁ gatiṁ*), which is rarely achieved by others.”

“When My father saw the opulence of Varuṇa, which is only material, he then considered this Vṛndāvana, which is the quintessence of Vaikuṇṭha, to be inferior to the planet of Varuṇa. It is just like the fool, who upon seeing the form and luster of an inferior pearl, considers a valuable first-class pearl to be inferior. Thus the cowherd men see themselves inferior to Varuṇa, and think attaining liberation and residence in Vaikuṇṭha is greater than the unique sweetness they relish in loving Me as their son. Liberation and Vaikuṇṭha both depend on Me, but I am completely independent. Nevertheless, it is seen that sometimes I am dependent on prema. Though it is evident to all, the Vrajavāsīs do not recognize it.”

“Some people become liberated and realize the happiness of Brahman. *Brahma Saṁhitā* 5.40 says: *yasya prabhā prabhavato jagad-aṇḍa-koṭi*, ‘Brahman is the effulgence coming out of My body.’ Brahman is unlimited and beyond *māyā*. I, Myself say in *Bhagavad-gītā* 14.27: *brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham*, ‘I am the basis of the impersonal Brahman.’ Matsya says ‘My greatness is called the Parabrahman.’ Thus Brahman, which is the all-pervading, formless light of My effulgence, is beyond material perception. However, I am also eternally present in various sweet personal forms which can be relished by one whose senses are anointed with prema.”

“As for Vaikuṇṭha*, Padma Purāṇa* says, ‘Mathura-mandala is far superior to Vaikuṇṭha. Within Mathurā is Vṛndāvana, the eternal transcendental pleasure abode of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, which remains unaffected even by the annihilation of the material world.’ The *Gopāla-tāpanī Upanisad* says, ‘Of the seven cities on Bhurloka, Gopāla-purī [residence of Lord Gopāla] is the very form of Brahman. Gopāla-purī exists on this earth just as a lotus floats on a lake.’ *Bṛhad-vāmana Purāṇa* says, ‘When the universe becomes invisible at the time of devastation, only the infinite, eternal, non-material Vaikuṇṭha remains, spreading its rays of blissful Brahman.’”

“Thus though Vṛndāvana is far superior to both Brahman and Vaikuṇṭha, the cowherd men desire to attain the experience of Brahman and Vaikuṇṭha only because they have not seen them with their eyes. Therefore I will now reveal these to them directly.”

One cannot translate this verse as follows: “The Vrajavāsīs, who are wandering in various wombs from higher species to lower due to ignorance, desire and action (*avidyā-kāma-karmabhiḥ*), do not know about Brahman liberation and Vaikuṇṭha which will be given by Me.” All the Vrajavāsīs are *nitya-siddhas* (eternally liberated associates of the Lord), who love Kṛṣṇa in various relationships of intimacy. They are completely unaffected by ignorance, lust or fruitive activity. The *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* says, “The *gopīs* who regarded Kṛṣṇa as their son were not subject to the ignorance of material life.” Lord Brahmā says, “What can you give to these Vrajavāsīs who will not accept the position of liberation or Vaikuṇṭha even if you offer it.” One should also see the logical explanations given after the killing of the Pūtanā witch (*Bhag.*10.6 verses 37-40).

|| 10.28.14 ||

iti sañcintya bhagavān mahā-kāruṇiko hariḥ

darśayām āsa lokaṁ svaṁ gopānāṁ tamasaḥ param

TRANSLATION

Thus deeply considering the situation, the all-merciful Supreme Personality of Godhead Hari revealed to the cowherd men His abode, which is beyond material darkness.

COMMENTARY

Considering (*sañcintya*) the situation, Kṛṣṇa, out of His infinite compassion (*mahā-kāruṇiko*) for the Vrajavāsīs, separated the cowherd men from Vṛndāvana for a few moments and showed them His own attractively charming spiritual planet (*lokaṁ svaṁ*), Kṛṣṇaloka. Kṛṣṇa did this to show them that the sweetness of Vṛndāvana was superior to Brahman and Vaikuṇṭha.

However, if the Vrajavāsīs achieved *sāyujya-mukti*, merging in Brahman, it would be impossible for them to come out of it. Then how would they ever again taste the sweetness of Vṛndāvana? Because Lord Kṛṣṇa is *vibhu* (all-powerful), He could take them out of *sāyujya-mukti* and Vaikuṇṭha, which are both beyond the darkness of matter (*tamasaḥ param*).

|| 10.28.15 ||

satyaṁ jñānam anantaṁ yad brahma-jyotiḥ sanātanam

yad dhi paśyanti munayo guṇāpāye samāhitāḥ

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa revealed the indestructible spiritual effulgence, which is unlimited, conscious and eternal. Sages see that spiritual existence in trance, when their consciousness is free of the modes of material nature.

COMMENTARY

Satyaṁ means all-pervading. *Jñānam* means non-material. *Anantam* means without limit. *Sanātanam* means eternally perfect (*nitya-siddha*). The *jñānīs* (*munaḥ*), who transcend the modes of nature (*guṇas*), see the Brahman effulgence (*brahma-jyoti*) in *samādhi*. Brahman and Bhauma Vṛndāvana both have the nature of unlimited, effulgent bliss. But the people on earth only experience the extreme sweetness of Vṛndāvana and not its awesome and majestic aspect (*aiśvarya*), due to the covering of *yogamāyā*. Just as a clay pot conceals a lamp shining within it, Kṛṣṇa revealed the *brahmajyoti* far beyond the material world, and not the spiritual effulgence manifested within Vṛndāvana on this earth planet.

The form of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is much sweeter than the impersonal Brahman effulgence. This is confirmed by the realization of *atmaramas* such as Śukadeva Gosvāmī. Though the form of Bhagavān is also all-pervading, He appeared localized in a form of medium size, human-like. Though Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is free from the six transformations of material nature, He seems to undergo birth, growth and so on. Bhagavān is free from the six material disturbances of hunger, thirst and so on, yet He seems to undergo hunger and thirst, perspire and become tired, express fear and bewilderment, and receive blows in battle. This is because Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa has unlimited inconceivable energies.

Similarly, Vṛndāvana like the body of the Lord, which spreads itself through millions of universes (as seen by Brahmā), is also limited and localized. The Lord says, "This Vṛndāvana spread over five *yojanas* is like My body." And though the scriptures proclaim that the moving and nonmoving entities of Vṛndāvana are free from the six material disturbances [hunger, thirst, lamentation, illusion, old age and death], one sees to his astonishment that the men, animals, birds and trees in Vṛndāvana experience hunger, thirst, birth, old age, want and dissolution.

|| 10.28.16 ||

te tu brahma-hradam nītā magnāḥ kṛṣṇena coddhṛtāḥ

dadṛśur brahmaṇo lokaṁ yatrākrūro 'dhyagāt purā

TRANSLATION

The cowherd men were brought by Lord Kṛṣṇa to the Brahmā-hrada, made to submerge in the water, and then lifted up. From the same vantage point that Akrūra saw the spiritual world, the cowherd men saw the planet of the Absolute Truth.

COMMENTARY

The unlimited spiritual effulgence, called the *brahmajyoti* in Text 15, is compared to a lake called brahma-hrada, which actually exists in the river Yamunā. Śrī Kṛṣṇa submerged the cowherd men in that lake literally, and also in the sense that He submerged them in the awareness of the impersonal Brahman. But then, as indicated by the word *uddhṛtāḥ* (uplift), Kṛṣṇa lifted them up to a higher understanding, that of the Personality of Godhead in His own planet, Kṛṣṇaloka. This is also stated in the

Bhāgavatam (2.7.31): *lokaṁ vaikuṇṭham upaneṣyati gokulam sma*, “Kṛṣṇa showed them Gokula, the highest planet in the spiritual sky.”

As the materialist is taken from the lake of matter to the realization of Brahman, so the cowherd men were taken from the lake of Brahman realization to the direct perception of Goloka Vṛndāvana, Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s blissful *prema-dhāma*. The bliss of *kṛṣṇa-prema* in Gokula far exceeds the paltry love-less happiness in Brahman.

The pastime involving Akrūra takes place later in the *Bhāgavatam*, The reason Śukadeva Gosvāmī says Akrūra saw Vaikuṇṭha purā, “previously,” is that all these incidents took place many years before the conversation between Śukadeva Gosvāmī and Mahārāja Parīkṣit.

|| 10.28.17 ||

nandādayas tu taṁ dṛṣṭvā paramānanda-nivṛtāḥ

kṛṣṇaṁ ca tatra cchandobhiḥ stūyamānaṁ su-vismitāḥ

TRANSLATION

Nanda Mahārāja and the other cowherd men felt the greatest happiness when they saw that transcendental abode. They were especially amazed to see Kṛṣṇa Himself there, surrounded by the personified Vedas, who were offering Him prayers.

COMMENTARY

Seeing Kṛṣṇaloka in the spiritual world, the cowherd men were amazed and filled with the highest bliss. They experienced Kṛṣṇaloka to be the same as the Vṛndāvana on earth. It is just like a millionaire who having lost all his wealth becomes full of bliss on finding some clue to the wealth. They found that Śrī Kṛṣṇa, with His lotus face covered with drops of perspiration and worshipable by millions of their life airs, was personally present as the Lord of the spiritual world. In their unique vision they were astonished to see Kṛṣṇa being praised by the personified *Vedas*.

The cowherd men thought, “Where have these effulgent beings come from? They are unknown to us, but we cannot ask them who they are. Though seeing us, Kṛṣṇa does not display His boyish manners, run towards us and embrace us with His two arms. We also

feel reluctant to approach Him and take Him on our laps. Today Kṛṣṇa has forgotten hunger and thirst. But how can His mother live without feeding Him?" In this way the cowherd men were astonished (*vismitāḥ*).

Employing her *līlā-śakti, yogamāyā* then brought the Vrajavāsīs back to earthly Vṛndāvana. Rūpa Gosvāmī has explained this fact in a verse in *Stava-mālā*: "May you be protected by Mukunda, who, in order to teach the cowherd men that there is no place as sweet as earthly Vṛndāvana, effortlessly showed them Kṛṣṇaloka in the spiritual world, and then brought them back to earthly Gokula."

Thus ends the commentary on the Twenty Eighth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Twenty-nine

Kṛṣṇa and the Gopīs Meet for the Rāsa Dance

|| 10.29.1 ||

śrī-bādarāyaṇir uvāca

bhagavān api tā rātṛīḥ śāradotphulla-mallikāḥ

vīkṣya rantuṁ manaś cakre yoga-māyām upāśritaḥ

TRANSLATION

Śrī Bādarāyaṇi said: Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, full in all opulences, yet upon seeing those autumn nights scented with blossoming jasmine flowers, He turned His mind toward loving affairs. To fulfill His purposes He employed His internal potency.

COMMENTARY

I offer my humble obeisances unto to my *guru-parampara* beginning with my *dīkṣā-guru* Śrī Rādhā-ramana [alias Śrī Rāma], my *parama-gurudeva* Śrī Kṛṣṇa-caraṇa, my *parātpara-gurudeva* Śrī Gaṅgā-nārāyaṇa, my *parama-parātpara-gurudeva* Śrīla Narottama Thākura, to Śrī Lokanātha Gosvāmī and Lord Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu. Paying repeated respects to my *dīkṣā-guru* Śrī Rādhā-ramaṇa-deva, I offer respects to Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the ocean of mercy. I take shelter of Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī, the eye of the universe and master of the worlds. I offer myself and everything I possess to Śrī

Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the *gopīs*' hearts, in hopes of attaining the eternal service of His beloveds.

In the next five chapters (29-33) known as the *rāsa-pañcādhyāya*, which are like the five life airs, Śukadeva Gosvāmī describes Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *rāsa*-līlā, the prize jewel within the treasury of all His pastimes. All glories to the *rāsa* dance! By the good fortune the Vraja-gopīs acquired for themselves by participating in the *rāsa* dance, they relished the topmost manifestation of all divine tastes even while present on this earth. This chapter describes how the thirsty *cātakī* birds of the *gopīs*' ears became inundated with the harshly poisonous shower from the monsoon cloud of Kṛṣṇa's flute. It also describes the arguments and counter-arguments of Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*, and Kṛṣṇa's playful disappearance from the midst of the *gopīs*.

When Kṛṣṇa was seven years old, on the Amāvasyā [dark moon] day of Kārtika month, He preached Karma-mīmāṁsā philosophy to prevent the Indra *yajna* of Nanda Mahārāja and the cowherd men. On the first day of the waxing moon (*pratipat*) the Vrajavāsīs worshiped Govardhana Hill. On the second day of the waxing moon Kṛṣṇa honored a feast on the shore of the Yamunā on the occasion of Bhrātṛ-dvitīyā, a day when sisters honor their brothers. Though this pastime is not described by Śukadeva Gosvāmī, it is understood that it took place. Then Indra cursed the Vrajavāsīs, and Kṛṣṇa held up Govardhana Hill from Sukla Tritiya until Navamī (seven days). On Sukla Daśamī (tenth day) the cowherd men discussed the incident with great surprise.

On Kārtika Sukla Ekādaśī, the heavenly Surabhi cow performed an *abhiseka* of Kṛṣṇa. On the Dvādaśī day, Kṛṣṇa went to Varuṇa-loka to rescue His father Nanda Mahārāja. On Pūrṇimā the cowherd men had *darśana* of Brahmāloka (Kṛṣṇaloka) and the autumn season finished. With the next Janmāṣṭamī, Kṛṣṇa turned eight years old. On the full moon night (*śārada-pūrṇimā*) of the Āśvina month Śrī Kṛṣṇa celebrated *rāsa-līla*. The first verse begins from this point.

Even though Kṛṣṇa is *bhagavān*, full in six varieties of opulences, He turned His mind toward enjoying because of the time, place and persons, which are three *uddīpanās* to excite to rāsa. The time was the full moon night of autumn (*śārada-pūrṇimā*), the place was the forest of Vṛndāvana, and the persons were the lovely damsels of Vraja. All three served to enflame the passion of enjoyment by their supreme capacity to attract Kṛṣṇa's mind with their sweetness.

The attraction of the autumn night:

Kṛṣṇa became desirous of relishing with His own ears and other senses the variegated charms of the topmost experts among billions of women in the arts of amorous love. He wanted to enjoy with His own senses the sweet sounds of the *gopīs*' voices, their beauty and fine fragrance, tenderness, cleverness and skill in dancing and playing music. Kṛṣṇa also wanted the *gopīs* to relish with their own ears and other senses the sweet sound of His voice.

Kṛṣṇa's Yogamāyā potency, under the influence of pure love, and impelled to act by Kṛṣṇa's *satya-sankalpa śakti* (potency to instantly fulfill desires), brought millions of other nights, which were all needed for carrying out such loving pastimes, into that single night of merely four *praharas* (twelve hours). Therefore the word for nights (*rātrīḥ*) is plural in this verse. This fact is confirmed later in the *Bhāgavatam* (10.33.38): *brahma-rātra upāvṛtte*, "After an entire night of Brahmā had passed." In other words, this night (*śārada-pūrṇimā*) became the length of Brahmā's night. Previously when Kṛṣṇa stole the clothing of the virgin gopīs, He said, "On all the future nights you will enjoy with Me." Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana says *rātrīḥ* is plural to indicate the numerous demigods in charge of the night, who came there to perform service.

The attractiveness of the place:

Sāradotphulla-mallikāḥ—Although out of season, the jasmine (*mallikāḥ*) flowers were blossoming in the autumn. In the next chapter, verse eleven also states, "At the time of the rāsa dance, the garland of jasmine (*kunda*) flowers on Kṛṣṇa's neck became tinged with the *kuṅkuma* from Rādhā's breasts." Thus it should be understood that the jasmines were blossoming out of season in the autumn. Verse forty-five of this chapter says, "The gentle wind bore the fragrance of lotus flowers (*kumudāmoda-vāyunā*)." Although lotuses do not bloom at night, it is understood that on this special night the lotuses also blossomed. Such is the superexcellent charm of Vṛndāvana, that there lotus flowers open even during the night. If we take an alternate reading of *śāradotphulla-mallikāḥ*, it means that both *śārada* and *mallikāḥ* flowers were blooming.

Attractiveness of the Vraja-gopīs:

Śrī Kṛṣṇa got ready to enjoy those nights. In this regard, some may interpret the word *reme* (take pleasure) [ref. SB 10.33.16] as meaning that since Kṛṣṇa is actually self-satisfied and innately full in all desires, this apparent enjoyment on His part with young women is only an external show, a false imitation of human life. It is in reply to such a possible interpretation that the phrase *rantuṁ manaś cakre* is used to inform us that Kṛṣṇa enjoyed internally within His mind (*manas*), not externally.

Very well, someone may say in agreement, this enjoyment is internal, but only for the cowherd damsels of Vraja because they are Kṛṣṇa's devotees. To refute such an idea the word *cakre* is intentionally used in *ātmanepada* [verb conjugation] instead of

parasmaipada to express that this enjoyment is for Kṛṣṇa's own satisfaction. This moreover shows the Vraja-gopīs had such an incredible degree of *kṛṣṇa-prema* that the Supreme Lord Himself, although already fulfilled in all possible pleasures, was thinking of enjoying with them. The phrase *ittham-bhūta-guṇo hariḥ* (the wonderful qualities of Lord Hari) in the famous *ātmārāmās ca munayo* verse from the *Bhāgavatam* (1.7.10) establishes the superexcellence of the Vraja-gopīs.

The *Viṣṇu Purāna* says, "Lord Madhusūdana, even though free from all flaws of passion and imperfect qualities, fulfilled His youth (*kaisora* age) by enjoying with the beautiful women of Vraja in the night." *Hari-vaṁśa* says, "Śrī Kṛṣṇa brought together in the night all the young cowherd girls, both married and unmarried, and fulfilled the purpose of His youth (*kaiśora* age) by enjoying with them."

If Kṛṣṇa failed to enjoy with the Vraja-gopīs, His youthfulness (*kaiśora* age) would have been fruitless. Therefore, great authorities such as Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī state: *kaiśoraṁ saphalī-karoti kalayan kuñje vihāraṁ hariḥ*, "Lord Hari perfects His youth (*kaiśoram*) by arranging loving pastimes in the bushes of Vṛndāvana" (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 2.1.231). Such statements by realized ācāryas of devotion subtly hint at the topmost supremacy of the young ladies of Vraja by revealing their supremely attractive qualities.

By using the word *yogamāyām* which means that this was an action of Kṛṣṇa's personal, inconceivable spiritual potency (*cit-śakti*), Śukadeva Gosvāmī reconciles everything contradictory and clarifies everything left unsaid. The prefix *upa* (fully) in the word *upāśritaḥ* (resorting to) indicates that Kṛṣṇa took shelter in a most profound and complete manner. The fact that Kṛṣṇa resorted to *yogamāyā*, out of all the potencies that lie at His disposal, pronounces the good fortune of *yogamāyā*.

|| 10.29.2 ||

tadoḍurājaḥ kakubhaḥ karair mukhaṁ prācyā vilimpann aruṇena śantamaiḥ

sa carṣaṇīnām udagāc chuco mṛjan priyaḥ priyāyā iva dīrgha-darśanaḥ

TRANSLATION

The moon then rose, anointing the face of the eastern horizon with the reddish hue of his comforting rays, and thus dispelling the pain of all who watched him rise. The moon was like a beloved husband who returns after a long absence and adorns the face of his beloved wife with red kuṅkuma.

COMMENTARY

When Kṛṣṇa became inclined to enjoy under the spell of the time and place, at that moment the moon, finding an opportunity to render service, rose of its own will in the eastern direction with its pleasing rays of light. The rising of the moon, the king of the stars (*uḍu-rājaḥ*), was another cause for the enflaming of passionate desires. In addition to being a stimulator (*uddīpana*) of conjugal feelings, the moon also served Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* by illuminating their pleasure pastimes with its brilliant light.

When a lover meets his beloved after a long separation, he colors her face with *kuṅkuma* (*aruṇena*, reddish color) with his own hand. Similarly, the rising moon colored the face of the western direction with the reddish hue of its pleasing rays (*karaiḥ*). The word *sa* expresses that he has already been mentioned.

The moon removed the discomfort caused by the heat of the sun from all men (*carṣaṇīnām*). The word *carṣaṇīnām*, which is in the genitive case, means "of humankind" according to the *Bhagavatam* (6.6.42):

> *aryamṇo mātṛkā patnī tayoś carṣaṇayaḥ sutāḥ*
>
> *yatra vai mānuṣī jātir brahmaṇā copakalpitā*
>
> "From the womb of Mātṛkā, the wife of Aryama, were born many learned scholars (*carṣaṇayaḥ*). Lord Brahmā arranged for these *carṣaṇayaḥ* to be the forefathers of the human race."

The idea of this verse is as follows: The moon-god, the very founder of the dynasty in which Kṛṣṇa appeared (Candra-vaṁśa) and the most ancient leader of the *brāhmaṇa* community, possesses many wives of his own who were all quite fit to be enjoyed, yet he is touching the face of the western direction, who is another's wife, namely Indra. By touching her, the moon-god is also making her attracted to him. This verse hints that if this is the case with the moon-god, the leader of Kṛṣṇa's dynasty, then certainly there is no fault in Kṛṣṇa, a descendent of his dynasty, enjoying with the *gopīs*. After all, Kṛṣṇa is a fresh youth intoxicated with the beauty of His human form, and He is an unmarried member of the cowherd community. Besides, Kṛṣṇa is so uniquely enchanting that He excites all the women in the universe!

|| 10.29.3 ||

dṛṣṭvā kumudvantam akhaṇḍa-maṇḍalaṁ
ramānanābhaṁ nava-kuṅkumāruṇam

vanaṁ ca tat-komala-gobhī rañjitaṁ

jagau kalaṁ vāma-dṛśāṁ manoharam

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa saw the unbroken disk of the full moon glowing with the red effulgence of newly applied vermilion, as if it were the face of the goddess of fortune. He also saw the kumuda lotuses opening in response to the moon's presence and the forest gently illumined by its rays. Thus the Lord began to play sweetly on His flute, attracting the minds of the beautiful-eyed gopīs.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa succumbed to romantic desires upon seeing the rising moon. Keeping in mind the saying, "whatever great men do others will follow" (*yad yad ācarati śreṣṭhas tat tad evetaro janaḥ*), and seeing the behavior of the founder of His own dynasty, Kṛṣṇa felt free to make a definite effort to attract others' wives there to enjoy without fear.

This verse indicates the two elements of *vibhāva* (causes of love for Kṛṣṇa to appear): *ālambana* (the shelter of rasa) and *uddīpana* (excitants to love). The moon is the *uddīpana* and Kṛṣṇa's form is the *ālambana*.

Uddīpana: *Kumut* is the same as *kumuda*, as stated in the *Visvakośa* dictionary, *kumude 'pi kumut proktam*, that moon in whose presence the *kumuda* lotuses can open. Another interpretation can also be given for this: The presence of the moon (and Kṛṣṇa) gave pleasure (*mud*) to the earth (*ku*). This also applies to Kṛṣṇa, since actually in this context the specific antecedent modified and the modifier is left unstated. The full moon manifested a form resembling an unbroken disk (*akhaṇḍa-maṇḍalaṁ*).

The moon is the brother of Ramā (Laksmī) because both were born from the churning of the Milk Ocean, therefore his face resembles hers. Or the word *ramā* refers to Rādhā, the original Laksmī, as we find in the *Bṛhad-gautamīya-tantra:sarva-lakṣmī-mayī sarva, kāntih sammohinī parā*, "Rādhā, the source of all Laksmīs, possesses all the attractiveness to attract the all-attractive Personality of Godhead."

The *gopīs* are also ramā because they enjoy (*ramaṇte*) and give pleasure (*ramayantī*) to Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Kṛṣṇa became absorbed in remembering the gopīs' faces upon seeing that moon. According to one interpretation, the faces of those *ramās* (*gopīs*) exhibited wonderfully effulgent complexions that revealed their inner transformations of love. Consequently, Kṛṣṇa saw Himself as red as a ball of *kuṅkuma* powder in the reflection of that shining moonlight (of the *gopīs*' faces). Or that moon (of the *gopīs*' faces) was red due to the recent application of *kuṅkuma*, and Kṛṣṇa's face had become colored (*rañjitam*) by the gentle rays (*komala gobhiḥ*) of that moon.

Otherwise the compound can be divided to give the word *abhira-jitaṁ*. According to yet another interpretation, the forest was tinged red (*abhira-jita*) by the famous rays of Kṛṣṇa's own bodily effulgence, or else by the cows (*gobhiḥ*) that He was tending. The absence of the expected inflectional ending *t'aj* is a poetic license of the sages.

Ālambana: Seeing these two opulent manifestations of the enflaming power of Cupid, Śrī Kṛṣṇa played sweetly on His flute. Verse forty says, "Is there any woman in the three worlds who can maintain her chastity on hearing the sweet melodious sounds of Kṛṣṇa's flute?" In what manner did Kṛṣṇa play His flute? This verse answers by saying that Kṛṣṇa played in such a way as to captivate even those young girls with enchanting eyes (*vāma-dṛśāṁ manoharam*). The *Sruti* confirms, *gāyantam śtrīya kāmayanta*, "The women became full of desire for that singing."

From this it should be concluded that Kṛṣṇa used the flute to utter the *kāma-bīja*, *klīm*—the seed *mantra* of transcendental love. The word *kalaṁ* (sweetly) indicates "K" and "L" coming from the two consonants *ka-kāra* and *la-kāra*. By removing the grammatical inflection from *vāma-dṛśāṁ*, we get *vāma-dṛk*, which is the name for the fourth vowel "I". With that vowel Kṛṣṇa's flute vibrated the fifteenth sound of the alphabet "M." The word *manaḥ* (mind) indicates the moon, the lord of the mind, which represents the *candra bindu* "M." The word *hara* (*manoharam*) means to attract or to combine. Thus the *kama-bija mantra* "*Klīm*" is indicated here. In other words, Kṛṣṇa's flute vibrated the *kāma-bīja*, the original *mantra* of Cupid which has the mysterious power to attract and enchant the minds of all the young damsels of Vraja.

|| 10.29.4 ||

niśamya gītāṁ tad anaṅga-vardhanaṁ

vraja-striyaḥ kṛṣṇa-gṛhīta-mānasāḥ

ājagmur anyonyam alakṣitodyamāḥ

sa yatra kānto java-lola-kuṇḍalāḥ

TRANSLATION

When the young women of Vṛndāvana heard Kṛṣṇa's flute song, which arouses romantic feelings, their minds were captivated by the Lord. They went to where their lover waited, each unknown to the others, moving so quickly that their earrings swung back and forth.

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs* went towards Kṛṣṇa as if they were puppets pulled by the strings of His flute song. That dulcet song was not only alluring, but it also increased their love (*anaṅga*).

Kṛṣṇa instigated a terrible act of thievery in Vṛndāvana when He played on His flute. The song of Kṛṣṇa's flute passed through the ears of the *gopīs*, and entered the treasure chamber of their hearts. That wonderful music stole all their most valuable possessions —their sobriety, shyness, fear and discrimination, along with their very minds—and in a split second this music delivered all these goods to Kṛṣṇa. Thus afflicted each beautiful *kiśorī* was thinking, 'I have to capture that great thief,' and thus they went forward, each unknown to the others.

They began to chase the thief to catch Him and retrieve their property. Where did they go? The *gopīs*' earrings were swinging as they rushed to that place where their beloved was standing. The word *kuṇḍalāḥ* (earrings) also indicates their bracelets and anklets were swinging too. It appears that thief did not consider the *gopīs*' external ornaments worthy of stealing.

|| 10.29.5 ||

duhantyo 'bhiyayuḥ kāścid dohaṁ hitvā samutsukāḥ

payo 'dhiśritya saṁyāvam anudvāsyāparā yayuḥ

TRANSLATION

Some of the gopīs were milking cows when they heard Kṛṣṇa's flute. They stopped milking and went off to meet Him. Some left milk curdling on the stove, and others left cakes burning in the oven.

COMMENTARY

Three verses (5-7) describe the gopīs complete absence of attach-ment to their duties in their haste to meet Kṛṣṇa. The *gopīs* could not wait a second, so they neglected all their duties based on “I and mine.” Some of them even left aside the particular duties of their social class. The *gopīs* engaged in milking the cows abandoned this work and went off. Some *gopīs* left pots of milk boiling on the stove, and others left wheat cakes baking in the oven.

|| 10.29.6-7 ||

pariveṣayantyas tad dhitvā pāyayantyaḥ śiśūn payaḥ

śuśrūṣantyaḥ patīn kāścid aśnantyo ’pāsya bhojanam

limpantyaḥ pramṛjantyo ’nyā añjantyaḥ kāśca locane

vyatyasta-vastrābharaṇāḥ kāścit kṛṣṇāntikaṁ yayuḥ

TRANSLATION

Some of them were getting dressed, feeding milk to their infants or rendering personal service to their husbands, but they all gave up these duties and went to meet Kṛṣṇa. Other gopīs were taking their evening meals, washing themselves, putting on cosmetics or applying kajjala to their eyes. But all the gopīs stopped these activities at once and, though their clothes and ornaments were in complete disarray, rushed off to Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

These two verses describe how the *gopīs* gave up their duties as wives and mothers. While engaged in dressing they abandoned that business and failed to dress themselves adequately. Some stopped bringing warm water to their husbands, and rendering other services such as serving food. While cleansing their bodies with oils, bathing, and anointing themselves with turmeric and sandalwood paste, they dropped everything and hurried out of their homes.

Some *gopīs* were in such a rush that they could not distinguish hand from foot or nose from ear, and thus put their ornaments in the wrong place as shown by the word (*vyatyasta*:disarray). Their behavior indicates *vibhrama* (bewilderment), one of the *anubhāvas*, bodily transformations indicating ecstatic love.

Vibhrama is described in *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi*, Anubhāva-prakarana (Text 34):

vallabha-prāpti-velāyāṁ, madanāvesa-sambhramāt,

vibhramo hāra-mālyādi, bhūṣā-sthāna- viparyayah

"Hastily preparing to meet her lover, the bewildered heroine may place her necklace, flower-garland, and other ornaments in the wrong places. This is called *vibhrama*."

|| 10.29.8 ||

tā vāryamāṇāḥ patibhiḥ pitṛbhir bhrātṛ-bandhubhiḥ

govindāpahṛtātmāno na nyavartanta mohitāḥ

TRANSLATION

Their husbands, fathers, brothers and other relatives tried to stop them, but Kṛṣṇa had already stolen their hearts. Enchanted by the sound of His flute, they refused to turn back.

COMMENTARY

"Out of extreme love the gopīs gave up all duties. That is expected but how could their husbands and other relatives give up their concern about them?" This is replied to in this verse.

Though the husbands tried to stop their wives and the fathers tried to stop their unmarried daughters, they could not dissuade them from going because their very souls had been stolen by Govinda (*govinda-apahṛta-ātmānaḥ*), what to speak of the gopīs' fear, shame and self-control. Thus the Vraja-gopīs moved as if they were in trance (*mohitāḥ*), like puppets pulled by strings.

How could their husbands, who out of fear of losing their reputation, would ordinarily never allow even the young girls' dead bodies to go alone into the forest at night, tolerate letting their wives go away in such a crazed state? This being true, Kṛṣṇa's internal potency, Yogamāyā, unfolded the entire romantic episode without interference. Yogamāyā did this by producing replica bodies of the *gopīs*, who then stayed in their

husbands' homes, while the original spiritual bodies of *gopīs* ran into the forest to dance with Govinda.

|| 10.29.9 ||

antar-gṛha-gatāḥ kāścid gopyo 'labdha-vinirgamāḥ

kṛṣṇaṁ tad-bhāvanā-yuktā dadhyur mīlita-locanāḥ

TRANSLATION

Some of the gopīs, however, could not manage to get out of their houses, and instead they remained home with eyes closed, meditating upon Him in pure love.

COMMENTARY

Śrī Rupa Gosvami describes in *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi* that there are two categories of *gopīs*: the eternally perfect (*nitya-siddhas*) and those who have become perfect by practicing *bhakti-yoga* (*sādhana-siddhas*). The *sādhana-siddhas* are of two categories: those who belong to special groups and those who do not. There are also two classes of the *gopīs* belonging to special groups: namely the *śruti-cārīs*, who come from the group of the personified *Vedas*, and the *ṛṣi-cārīs*, who come from the group of sages who saw Lord Rāmacandra in the Dandakāranya forest.

This same fourfold categorization of the *gopīs* is given in the *Padma Purāṇa*:

gopyas tu śrutayo jñeyā ṛṣi-jā gopa-kanyakāḥ

deva-kanyāś ca rājendra na mānuṣyāḥ kathañcana

"It is understood that some of the *gopīs* are personified Vedic literatures, while others are reborn sages, daughters of cowherds, or demigod maidens. But by no means, my dear King, are any of them ordinary humans." Here we are informed that although the *gopīs* appeared to be human cowherd girls, they actually were not. Thus the contention that they are mortals is refuted. The daughters of cowherds, referred to here as *gopa-kanyās*, must be eternally perfect, since we never hear of them having executed any *sādhana*. Their apparent *sādhana* of worshiping goddess Kātyāyanī in the role of *gopīs* merely manifests their manner of playing like human beings. The *Bhāgavatam* narrates the account of this worship only to show how they had fully taken on the role of cowherd girls.

"That the *gopa-kanyā gopīs* are actually *nitya-siddhas*, eternally perfect devotees of the Lord, is established by a statement in *brahma-saṁhitā* (5.37): *ānanda-cinmaya-rasa-pratibhāvitābhiḥ*, which proves that the *gopīs* are Śrī Kṛṣṇa's spiritual pleasure potency. Similarly, we have the words of the *Gautamīya-tantra, hlādinī yā mahā-śaktiḥ*. Further corroboration of their eternal perfection is that these *gopīs*, being co-eternal with their beloved Lord Kṛṣṇa, are mentioned along with Him in the eighteen-syllable *kṛṣṇa mantra*, the ten-syllable *mantra* and others. Moreover, the worship of these *mantras*, and also the *Śrutis* that present them, has been in existence since time immemorial."

The *deva-kanyās*, daughters of the demigods, who are mentioned in the verse beginning *sambhavas tv amara-striyaḥ*, are explained in *Śrī Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi* as partial expansions of the *nitya-siddha gopīs*. That the *śruti-cārī gopīs*, the personified *Vedas*, are *sādhana-siddha* is understood from the following words of theirs quoted in the *Bṛhad-vāmana Purāṇa*:

kandarpa-koṭi-lāvaṇye tvayi dṛṣṭe manāṁsi naḥ

kāminī-bhāvam āsādya smara-kṣubdhānya-saṁśayāḥ

yathā tval-loka-vāsinyaḥ kāma-tattvena gopīkāḥ

bhajanti ramaṇaṁ matvā cikīrṣājaninas tathā

"Since we have seen Your face, which possesses the beauty of millions of Cupids, our minds have become lusty after You like those of young girls, and we have forgotten all other allurements. We have developed the desire to act towards You as do the *gopīs* who dwell on Your transcendental planet and who manifest the nature of Cupid by worshiping You with the idea that You are their paramour."

"The *ṛṣi-cārī gopīs* are also *sādhana-siddha*, as stated in *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi*: *gopālopāsakāḥ pūrvam aprāptābhīṣṭa-siddhayaḥ*. Previously they were all *mahārṣis* living in the Daṇḍaka forest." We find evidence for this in the *Padma Purāṇa, Uttara-khaṇḍa*:

dṛṣṭvā rāmaṁ hariṁ tatra bhoktum aicchan su-vigraham

te sarve strītvam āpannāḥ samudbhūtāś ca gokule

hariṁ samprāpya kāmena tato muktā bhavārṇavāt

This verse says that upon seeing Lord Rāmacandra, the sages in the Daṇḍaka forest desired to enjoy Lord Hari (Kṛṣṇa). In other words, the sight of Lord Rāma's

> sweet beauty reminded them of Lord Hari, Gopāla, their personal object of worship, and they then wanted to enjoy with Him. But out of embarrassment they did not act on that desire, whereupon Lord Śrī Rāma, who is like a desire tree, gave His mercy to them, even though they had not voiced their request. Thus their desire was fulfilled, as stated by the words beginning *te sarve*. By means of their lusty attraction they became freed from the ocean of material existence, and coincidentally they got the association of Hari in conjugal love.

"In the present verse of the *Bhāgavatam* we understand that it was the *gopīs* who had children who were kept forcibly at home. This fact is clear from verses yet to come: *mātaraḥ pitaraḥ putrāḥ* (SB 10.29.20), *yat-paty-apatya-suhṛdām anuvṛttir aṅga* (SB 10.29.32) and *pati-sutānvaya-bhrātṛ-bāndhavān* (SB 10.31.16)."

In his comments on the Tenth Canto, Śrīla Kavi-karṇapūra Gosvāmī also states that those *gopīs* who had children were prevented from going to meet Kṛṣṇa, as seen from later verses such as these: Kṛṣṇa said, "Your mothers, fathers, sons, brothers and husbands are searching for you." The *gopīs* replied, "But You have advised us that the proper religious duty for women is to faithfully serve their husbands, children and other relatives. Giving up husbands and sons, we have come to You." Without trying to repeat all his thoughts on this verse, we will give the gist of his purport:

Upon seeing the sweetness of Lord Rāma, the sages who were worshipers of Lord Gopāla immediately became elevated to the mature platform of spontaneous devotion, automatically reaching the stages of *niṣṭā, ruci, āsakti* and *bhāva* (firm faith, attraction, attachment and ecstatic devotion). However, they had not yet attained perfection and become completely freed of all material contamination. Nevertheless, Śrī Yogamāyā-devi arranged for them to take birth in Gokula from the wombs of gopīs and become cowherd girls. By associating with Śrī Rādhā and other eternally perfect (*nitya-siddha*) *gopīs*, some of these new *gopīs* fully manifested *pūrva-raga* loving attraction for Kṛṣṇa as soon as they reached puberty. (This kind of attraction develops even before one meets the beloved.) When these new *gopīs* attained the direct association of Kṛṣṇa, all their remaining contamination became burned up, and they achieved the advanced stages of *prema, sneha* and so on.

Even though they were in the company of their cowherd husbands, by the power of Yogamāyā the *gopīs* remained unsullied by sexual contact with them; rather, they were situated in purely spiritual bodies that Kṛṣṇa enjoyed. On the night they heard the sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute, their husbands tried to stop them, but by the merciful assistance of Yogamāyā the *sādhana-siddha gopīs* were able to go forth to their beloved together with the *nitya-siddha gopīs*.

Other *gopīs*, however, because of not getting the good fortune of associating with Rādhā and other *nitya-siddha gopīs*, had not achieved the stage of prema, and so their contamination was not completely burned away. They enjoyed intimately with their cowherd husbands and gave birth to children. But a short time later even these *gopīs* developed their *purva-raga* by hankering intensely for the intimate physical association of Kṛṣṇa—a hankering they acquired by associating with the advanced *gopīs*. Becoming worthy recipients of the mercy of the perfected *gopīs*, they assumed spiritual bodies fit to be enjoyed by Kṛṣṇa. When Yogamāyā failed to help them overcome their husbands' attempts to keep them from going out, they felt themselves cast into the worst calamity. Viewing their husbands, brothers, fathers and other family members as enemies, they came close to dying. Just as other women might remember their mothers or other relatives at the time of death, these *gopīs* remembered the sole friend of their very life, Kṛṣṇa, as stated in the present verse of the *Bhāgavatam*, beginning with the word *antar*.

It is implied that those gopīs were not able to exit because they were held back by their husbands, who were standing before them with sticks in their hands, scolding them. Although these gopīs were perpetually absorbed in love for Kṛṣṇa, at that particular time they meditated upon Him and cried out within: "Alas, alas, O only friend of our life! O ocean of artistic skills within the Vṛndāvana forest! Please let us become your girlfriends in some future life, because at this time we cannot see Your lotus-like face with our eyes. So be it; we shall look upon You with our minds." Lamenting in this way, the *gopīs* shut their eyes and meditated deeply upon Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.29.10-11 ||

duḥsaha-preṣṭha-viraha-tīvra-tāpa-dhutāśubhāḥ

dhyāna-prāptācyutāśleṣa-nirvṛtyā kṣīṇa-maṅgalāḥ

tam eva paramātmānaṁ jāra-buddhyāpi saṅgatāḥ

jahur guṇa-mayaṁ dehaṁ sadyaḥ prakṣīṇa-bandhanāḥ

TRANSLATION

For those gopīs who could not go to see Kṛṣṇa, intolerable separation from their beloved caused an intense agony that burned away all impious karma. By meditating upon Him they realized His embrace, and the ecstasy they then felt exhausted their material piety. Although Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Soul, these girls simply thought of Him as their male lover and associated with Him in that intimate mood. Thus their karmic bondage was nullified and they abandoned their gross material bodies.

COMMENTARY

In order to hide the intimate attainment of the gopīs from the gross materialists, Śukadeva Gosvāmī presents an external meaning in this verse. While at the same time he reveals the internal meaning to the confidential devotees well versed in the scientific conclusions of devotion.

From this verse the materialist can understand that Kṛṣṇa gave the gopīs liberation. All inauspicious things (*dhutāśubhāḥ*)were removed from the *gopīs*' hearts by enduring the suffering of intense separation from Kṛṣṇa. And all their auspicious *karmic* reactions (*kṣīṇa maṅgalā*) were removed by their blissfully embracing Kṛṣṇa in meditation. Having thus destroyed all their *prārabdha karmas* (manifest acts caused by previous deeds), the gopīs thought of Kṛṣṇa as their paramour, attained the Paramātmā and gave up their bodies.

Kṛṣṇa's devotees, however, understand the verse from the following internal perspective: By meditation on Kṛṣṇa the gopīs experienced both meeting and separation, unlimited happiness and distress, and at last attained their desire. The intense pain caused by intolerable separation from Kṛṣṇa removed all the inauspiciousness things (*dhutāśubhāḥ*) from within the *gopīs*. Seeing the intense agony the gopīs endured due to separation from Kṛṣṇa, thousands of inauspi-cious things—things even as fearsome as the subterranean fires of millions of universes or the powerful *kālakūṭa* poison swallowed by Lord Śiva, gave up their identity as tortuous elements, being defeated by the pain experienced by the gopīs, and began to tremble.

When the *gopīs* meditated on Kṛṣṇa, He manifested personally before them. Now endowed with the appropriate identity and mood, the gopīs experienced infinite bliss by embracing the astonishing transcendental body of Acyuta, which was full of transcendental love for them. That joy made all their good fortune (*maṅgalāḥ*), both material and spiritual, seem insignificant (*kṣīṇa*). In other words, seeing the extreme bliss generated in the gopīs by embracing Kṛṣṇa through meditation, all the sensual pleasures found in millions of universes and even the supersensory pleasure of spiritual bliss (*brahmānanda*) became withered, inferior and insignificant (*kṣīṇa*).

To say that because sin (*pāpa:āsubhāḥ*) and piety (*punya:maṅgalāḥ*) can only be destroyed by experiencing pain and pleasure, the gopīs' *pāpa* and *puṇya* were destroyed by the distress and joy arising from their separation and union with Kṛṣṇa is not acceptable to the Vaisnavas, because separation from Kṛṣṇa is not caused by sin and meeting with Kṛṣṇa is not caused by piety. Thus the first meaning of the verse is rejected. According to authorities, the destruction of *karmic* reactions (*prārabdha:āśubhāḥ, maṅgalāḥ*) occurs during the stage of *bhajana* when a devotee reaches the level of *anartha-nivrtti*.

The word *paramātmānaṁ* here means He who possesses the highest (*parama*) *prema*. The *gopīs* directly achieved (*samyak gatah*) the supreme goal of *prema* (*paramātmā*) by thinking of Kṛṣṇa as their illicit lover (*jāra buddhyā*). The gopīs realized Kṛṣṇa in an even fuller sense than did Rukminī and His other queens, who thought of Him most respectfully as their husband. An unpredictable excellence of prema is manifest by thinking of Kṛṣṇa as a paramour instead of a husband. This is shown in words of Uddhava: *yā dustyajaṁ sva-janam ārya-pathaṁ ca hitvā*, "Though the gopīs abandoned their families and the path of proper conduct, which is very difficult to do, they worshiped Kṛṣṇa who is sought by the *Vedas*" (SB 10.47.61)

In Kṛṣṇa's pastimes on earth He often turns the most lowly things into the most elevated. As Bhīṣma stated, Kṛṣṇa's pastime of acting as Arjuna's chariot driver was even more elevated than the pastimes in which He acted as a mighty King of kings: *vijaya-ratha-kuṭumba ātta-totre/ dhṛta-haya-raśmini tac-chriyeskṣaṇīye*, "I concentrate upon the chariot driver of Arjuna, who stood with a whip in His right hand and a bridle rope in His left, and who very carefully protected Arjuna's chariot by all means" (SB 1.9.39).

Similarly, in Kṛṣṇa's *vraja-līlā* we see that the normally inferior *śṛṅgāra-rasa* (conjugal love) becomes better than the normally superior mood *śānta-rasa* (passive adoration); and in *śṛṅgāra-rasa* the socially unacceptable attitude of loving a paramour becomes superior to the loving exchange between legitimate spouses. In the same way, Kṛṣṇa's decorations of lowly *guñjā* berry necklaces, red oxide paste and peacock feathers are superior to the most valuable jeweled ornaments.

The word *saṅgatāh* (directly meeting Kṛṣṇa) implies that some of those *gopīs* who were restrained by their husbands or fathers eventually escaped and met Kṛṣṇa on the night of the *rāsa* dance, or that some of them were able to meet Kṛṣṇa on another night. It may be objected, however, that it is not proper for the Supreme Lord to sport with women whose bodies have already been enjoyed by other men. This objection is replied to by the words beginning *jahuḥ* (gave up). The word *deham* (body) is used here in the singular form to indicate unity of category, even though the *gopīs* are many. Some authorities say that by the power of Yogamāyā the *gopīs*' bodies disappeared in a way no one noticed. Others say that the 'body' referred to in this context is the inferior body composed of the modes of material nature. Thus by the prominence of the adjective *guṇa-mayam*, it is understood that before the gopīs heard the sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute their bodies had been twofold, material and spiritual, and upon hearing the flute they gave up the material bodies, which their husbands had enjoyed.

In this regard the following should be considered. When devotees practice devotional service under the shelter of a bona fide spiritual master, they engage their ears and other senses in acts of pure devotion by hearing and chanting about Kṛṣṇa, remembering Him, offering obeisances and personally serving His Deity form. Thus the devotees make the Lord's transcendental qualities the objects of their senses, as stated by the Lord Himself: *nirguṇo mad-apāśrayaḥ*, "The devotees who take shelter of Kṛṣṇa transcend the material modes." (SB 11.25.26) Yet sometimes the devotees may take as their sense objects mundane sounds and tastes and that is material. Thus a devotee's body can have two aspects, transcen-dental (*nirgūna*) and material (*guṇa-mayaṁ*).

According to one's level of devotional service, to that degree the transcendental aspects of one's body become prominent and the material aspects diminish. This transformation is described in the following verse from the *Bhāgavatam* (11.2.42):

bhaktiḥ pareśānubhavo viraktir

anyatra caiṣa trika eka-kālaḥ

prapadyamānasya yathāśnataḥ syus

tuṣṭiḥ puṣṭiḥ kṣud-apāyo 'nu-ghāsam

"With each bite of food that a person takes, three effects occur simultaneously: he obtains satisfaction, nourishment, and cessation of hunger. Similarly, surrendered souls engaged in *bhajana* simultaneously experience three effects: the awakening of *bhakti* aiming at *prema*, direct manifestation of the Lord's beloved form, and detachment from material objects."

Thus those who eat only a little food will derive a little satisfaction, a little nourishment and slight relief from hunger. Similarly, those who perform only a little hearing and chanting about Kṛṣṇa will attain a little *bhakti*, some realization of the Lord and a little detachment. However, when one achieves unalloyed *kṛṣṇa-prema*, the material portions of the body disappear and the body becomes completely spiritualized. Nonetheless, so as not to disturb the false opinions of atheists and to protect the confidentiality of devotional service, Śrī Kṛṣṇa usually has His illusory energy exhibit the demise of the gross body. An example of this is the disappearance of the Yādavas during the Mauṣala-lilā.

Sometimes, however, to proclaim the superiority of *bhakti* there is no death as in the case of a devotee like Dhruva Mahārāja, who Kṛṣṇa allowed to go to the spiritual world in his selfsame body. We can cite evidence for this point from the twenty-fifth chapter of the Eleventh Canto (Text 32):

yeneme nirjitāḥ saumya guṇā jīvena citta-jāḥ

bhakti-yogena man-niṣṭho mad-bhāvāya prapadyate

> "By practicing *bhakti-yoga* a devotee conquers over the gunas in the heart, and being My (Kṛṣṇa) *nirguna-bhakta* (unalloyed devotee) He attains a form or mood like Mine."

Kapiladeva also speaks of the transcendental nature of *bhakti*. As *bhakti* is transcendental, the ingredients of worship such as flowers, incense and ghee also become transcendental by the touch of the limbs of bhakti. Thus the defeat and destruction of that which is composed of the modes of material nature can be brought about only by the process of devotional service.

The word *dhutāśubhāḥ* can also mean: by the pain caused by intolerable separation from Kṛṣṇa the gopīs cast off (*vidhuta*) their *guna-mayaṁ dehaṁ*, inauspicious (*āśubhāḥ*) material bodies. By the ecstasy the gopīs felt by embracing Kṛṣṇa in meditation their auspicious (*maṅgalāh*) spiritual bodies, far from being destroyed, simply increased (*ākṣīṇa*) and became more prominent because of bliss. Yogamāyā helped the gopīs get free from the restraints of their husbands and from the bondage of ignorance because all their *karma* was completely destroyed (*prakṣīṇa-bandhanāḥ*). However, we should not make the mistake of thinking that the gopīs died. As the Lord Himself states:

yā mayā krīḍatā rātryāṁ vane 'smin vraja āsthitāḥ

alabdha-rāsāḥ kalyāṇyo māpur mad-vīrya-cintayā

> "All those auspicious *gopīs*, who were locked in their houses by their husbands and could not attend the *rāsa-līla* on the full moon night of autumn, attained Me by remembering My potent pastimes." (SB 10.47.37)

By using the word *kalyāṇyah* in this verse, Kṛṣṇa implies, "Even though these *gopīs* wanted to give up their bodies because of their husbands' prohibitions and the torment of separation from Me, for them to die at the very beginning of the most auspicious festival of the *rāsa* dance would have been displeasing to Me and thus inauspicious (*ākalyāṇyaḥ*). Therefore, they did not die, rather they became fortunate (*kalyāṇyaḥ*)."

More evidence that the gopīs who were prevented from going to see Kṛṣṇa did not physically die is provided Śrī Śukadeva's later in this Canto (10.47.38): *tā ūcur uddhavaṁ prītās tat-sandeśāgata-smṛtīḥ*, "Then the *gopīs* replied to Uddhava, feeling satisfied because His message had reminded them of Kṛṣṇa." The word *tā* here refers to those *gopīs* restrained from the *rāsa-līla* by their husbands. Yet they remained alive, and were now present speaking with Uddhava while Kṛṣṇa was living in Mathurā. In other words, the gopīs gave up their material (*gunamaya*) bodies without dying. Parched by the intense heat of separation, the gopīs gave up the *gunamaya* nature of their bodies and attained pure spiritual bodies, just like the bodies of such great devotees as Dhruva Mahārāja. This is the meaning of the *gopīs*' "giving up their bodies."

Verse ten and several others in the *Bhāgavatam* indicate that the *gopīs* remained home without dying and only attained Kṛṣṇa's association in meditation: *dhyāna-prāptā-acyuta-āśleṣa,* by meditation the *gopīs* obtained the embrace of Acyuta Kṛṣṇa (10.29.10); *alabdha-vinirgamāh*, not obtaining any exit (10.29.9); *vraje-āsthitāḥ*, remaining in the village of Vraja (10.47.37); and *mā-āpuḥ mat-vīrya-cintayā*, the *gopīs* achieved Me by meditation upon My valorous pastimes (10.47.37).

However, here verse eleven says *saṅgatāḥ*, "The *gopīs* got Kṛṣṇa's direct association." Whereas *Bhāgavatam* 10.47.37 says *alabdha-rāsāḥ*, "The *gopīs* did not attain the *rāsa* dance." Therefore it should be understood that among the *gopīs* who were locked in their houses there were two types.

The following analogy illustrates the statuses of the various *gopīs*: By observing seven or eight ripe mangoes on a tree, a wise servant can ascertain that all the fruits on the tree are ripe. Then he will pick them also and bring them home, where in due course the sun's rays and other agents will make them fine-looking, fragrant and delicious—fit to be offered to the king for his enjoyment. When the time comes for the king to take his meal, a discriminating servant can choose those fruits ready to offer him. From the appearance of the fruits the servant can tell which are ripe in the middle but still raw on the outside and thus not yet fit for the king. After two or three days the remaining fruits will become ripe, and then they too will be ready to offer to the king.

Similarly, among the *muni-cārī gopīs* who took birth in Gokula, those who had completely given up their *guna-maya* bodies and very early in life achieved purely spiritual bodies were able to remain untouched by any other man; thus Yogamāyā allowed them to join the *nitya-siddha* and other advanced *gopīs* when they went to meet Kṛṣṇa. Other *muni-cārī gopīs* still retained some connection with the external material body, but even they, after experiencing the pain of separation from Śrī Kṛṣṇa, gave up their conception of their material (*guṇa maya*) bodies and assumed perfectly

transcendental bodies, purified of all taint of contact with other men. On the night of the *rāsa* dance, Yogamāyā sent some of these *gopīs* out behind those who had already gone out; others, who Yogamāyā saw still had a slight amount of contamination, she kept back to further purify with the heat of separation, and then she sent them out on some other night.

After enjoying the pleasures of the *rāsa* dance and other pastimes with Kṛṣṇa, the *muni-cārī gopīs* who had participated went back to their homes when the night was over, as did the *nitya-siddha* and other advanced *gopīs*. Now Yogamāyā protected these *muni-cārī gopīs* from the material association of their husbands. In other words, these *gopīs* became detached from their husbands, sons and daughters, and their love for Kṛṣṇa increased more and more. Since these *gopīs* were thoroughly immersed in the great ocean of love for Kṛṣṇa, their breasts dried up so that they could not feed their infants. Becoming disinterested in raising their children, their family members thought they were possessed by ghosts. In conclusion, it is not unseemly that the *gopīs* who were previously in material association joined in the *rāsa* dance.

Some *ācāryas* conclude that the *gopīs* locked in their homes did not have children. According to them whenever such words as *apatya* “children” are used in verses yet to come, these words refer to the children of co-wives, to adopted children or to nephews and nieces.

|| 10.29.12 ||

śrī-parīkṣid uvāca

kṛṣṇaṁ viduḥ paraṁ kāntaṁ na tu brahmatayā mune

guṇa-pravāhoparamas tāsāṁ guṇa-dhiyāṁ katham

TRANSLATION

Śrī Parīkṣit Mahārāja said: O sage, the gopīs knew Kṛṣṇa only as their lover, not as the Supreme Absolute Truth. So how could these girls, their minds caught up in the waves of the modes of nature, free themselves from material attachment?

COMMENTARY

Though Parīkṣit Mahārāja understood the meaning of Śukadeva Gosvāmī’s words, he noticed the expressions on the faces of some of the more materialistic persons present there and realized the doubt lurking in their hearts. To remove their doubts he asked

this question: “O sage, O knower of everything! Although Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality (*parama*), the *gopīs* knew Kṛṣṇa only as their lover (*kāntam*). How did the *gopīs* become free from the modes of nature by thinking, ‘Let us enjoy with Kṛṣṇa.’”

Śukadeva Gosvāmī answered, “The sastras explain that only knowledge of the Supersoul can award liberation: *tam eva viditvāti mṛtyum eti, nānyah panthā vidyate ‘yanāya*, ‘One can attain the perfect stage of liberation from birth and death simply by knowing the Supreme Lord, and there is no other way to achieve this perfec-tion.’ (*Svetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 3.8) Also *svātmānam ātmātmatayā vicakṣate*, ‘The individual soul can only realize the Supreme Soul when he recognizes His transcendental position.’” (SB 10.14.24)

|| 10.29.13 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

uktaṁ purastād etat te caidyaḥ siddhiṁ yathā gataḥ

dviṣann api hṛṣīkeśaṁ kim utādhokṣaja-priyāḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: This point was explained to you previously. Since even Śiśupāla, who hated Kṛṣṇa, achieved perfection, then what to speak of the Lord’s dear devotees.

COMMENTARY

Though the king of sages knew this was not Parīkṣit’s question, he made a pretense of scolding him in order to chastise others for their foolishness. Śukadeva Gosvāmī said, “You must have no intelligence at all to be asking such a question. Previously in the Seventh Canto, I told you that Śiśupāla attained liberation though he hated the Lord. If he could attain *sāyujya-mukti* with that unfavorable attitude, what can we say of the *gopīs*’ favorable attitude characterized by conjugal desire?”

The word *hṛṣīkeśaṁ* indicates that Kṛṣṇa personally descends to this world by His unconditional, causeless mercy. Even though Kṛṣṇa is inaccessible to the senses (*hṛṣīka*) of such persons as Brahmā, nevertheless He makes Himself visible by His inconceivable divine potency, and allows Himself to be seen by the senses of even the lowest of men. Kṛṣṇa does this to deliver them, and thus exhibit the power of His compassion. These

gopīs, on the other hand, are the objects and subjects of affection for *adhokṣaja* Kṛṣṇa, the transcendental Lord who lies beyond the purview of ordinary senses.

Why did Śukadeva reject the recent example of Aghāsura achieving perfection in Vṛndāvana, and instead cite an example from Kṛṣṇa's *mathurā-līlā* concerning the most degraded Caidya? By citing Śiśupāla (Cediraja), Śukadeva Gosvāmī reveals a confidential truth to King Parīkṣit. Just as the *gopīs* who were kept in their houses eventually attained spiritual bodies, similarly, Śiśupāla assumed his eternal spiritual body as an associate of the Lord, at the removal of his *guna-maya* (material) body attained by a sage's curse because of his extreme materialistic illusion.

In reality, Śiśupāla's spiritual body as a personal associate of the Lord was always present hidden within. It is stated in the *Bhāgavatam* (7.1.46): *kṛṣṇa-cakra-hata-aṁhasau*, "By the cakra of Kṛṣṇa the sins of Dantavakra and Śiśupāla were removed." In other words, the cakra removed their sins rather than killing them, and then they attained the perfection (*siddim gataḥ*) of returning to their positions as attendants of the Lord in Vaikuṇṭha. This is also stated in reference to Jaya and Vijaya, who appeared as Śiśupāla and Dantavakra in Kṛṣṇa's pastimes.

> *vairānubandha-tīvreṇa dhyānenācyuta-sātmatām*
>
> *nītau punar hareḥ pārśvaṁ jagmatur viṣṇu-pārṣadau*
>
> "These two associates of Lord Viṣṇu—Jaya and Vijaya—maintained a feeling of enmity for a very long time. Because of always thinking of Kṛṣṇa in this way, they regained the shelter of the Lord, having returned home, back to Godhead." (SB 7.1.47)

|| 10.29.14 ||

nṛṇāṁ niḥśreyasārthāya vyaktir bhagavato nṛpa

avyayasyāprameyasya nirguṇasya guṇātmanaḥ

TRANSLATION

O King, the Supreme Lord is inexhaustible and immeasurable, and He is untouched by the material modes because He is their controller. His personal

appearance in this world is meant for bestowing the highest benefit on humanity.

COMMENTARY

Śrī Kṛṣṇa descends to the material world to show mercy to the devotees and demons alike. Kṛṣṇa appears here with this idea in His mind, "I shall deliver all those persons who have even a little personal connection with Me, even though they have not embarked on any path of spiritual advancement. This point is explained in verses 14-15.

Kṛṣṇa comes to bestow "the highest benefit" (*niḥśreyasa*), which for some means merging into God's existence (*sāyujya-mukti*), or liberation to Vaikuṇṭha (*sālokya-mukti*), or pure love of God (*prema-bhakti*). Kṛṣṇa does not have to personally appear to kill an insignificant demon like Kaṁsa, since by the mere movement of His eyebrows He can destroy millions of universes.

Kṛṣṇa is called *avyayasya* (inexhaustible) because though He gives Himself to each and every devotee, He is never depleted. "But in what way is Kṛṣṇa so?" someone may ask. The answer is given beginning with the word *aprameyasya*, which means immeasurable. Kṛṣṇa is immeasurable because He is untouched by material qualities (*nirguṇasya*) and filled with unlimited transcendental qualities (*guṇa-ātmanaḥ*).

|| 10.29.15 ||

kāmaṁ krodhaṁ bhayaṁ sneham aikyaṁ sauhṛdam eva ca

nityaṁ harau vidadhato yānti tan-mayatāṁ hi te

TRANSLATION

Persons who constantly direct their lust, anger, fear, protective affection, feeling of impersonal oneness or friendship toward Lord Hari are sure to become absorbed in thought of Him.

COMMENTARY

In this verse Śukadeva Gosvāmī says, "Therefore Parīkṣit, you should understand the conclusion clearly. The Vraja-gopīs and others worshiped Kṛṣṇa with a mood of lust (*kāma*); Śiśupāla worshiped Kṛṣṇa with a mood of anger (*krodha*); Kaṁsa, a mood of fear

(*bhayam*); Nanda Mahārāja, a mood of parental love (*sneha*); the self-satisfied sages, a mood of oneness (*aikya*); the Vṛṣṇis, Pāṇḍavas and others, a mood of friendship (*sauhṛdam*). In whichever mood they worshiped Śrī Kṛṣṇa; they realized the respective eternal pastimes (*tan-mayatāṁ*) of the Lord. This tells us that the various pastimes of all these persons are eternal. Even today anyone who maintains any of these individual moods toward Kṛṣṇa will achieve Him. Just as one attached to women is called *strī-mayā*, the *gopīs* are called *tan-maya*, which means "totally absorbed in Kṛṣṇa." For the others *tan-mayatāṁ* means *sāyujya*, merging in the *brahmajyoti*.

|| 10.29.16 ||

na caivaṁ vismāyāḥ kāryo bhavatā bhagavaty aje

yogeśvareśvare kṛṣṇe yata etad vimucyate

TRANSLATION

You should not be so astonished by Kṛṣṇa, the unborn master of all masters of mystic power, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. After all, it is the Lord who liberates this world.

COMMENTARY

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said, "Though others may be amazed, it should not be astonishing for you, who have been well aware of Kṛṣṇa's glories from within your mother's womb." Though Kṛṣṇa appears as a cowherd boy, He is Bhagavān. Though Kṛṣṇa is the son of Devakī, He is unborn (*aje*). Though Kṛṣṇa flirts with the damsels of Vraja, He is the ultimate master of all masters of mystic *yoga* (*yogeśvareśvare*), and the original source of all incarnations.

It is not astonishing that Kṛṣṇa liberates (*yata etad vimucyate*) all the moving and nonmoving creatures in the entire universe, as explained in Śrīdhara Swāmi's commentary. *Etad vimucyate* can also mean that although this universe is distinct from the transcendental paraphernalia of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, still by remembering the moods of *kāma* and *sneha* of Kṛṣṇa's various devotees, even today anyone in the universe can become freed from the flux of the modes of nature.

|| 10.29.17 ||

tā dṛṣṭvāntikam āyātā bhagavān vraja-yoṣitaḥ

avadad vadatāṁ śreṣṭho vācaḥ peśair vimohayan

TRANSLATION

Seeing that the girls of Vraja had arrived, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the best of speakers, greeted them with charming words that bewildered their minds.

COMMENTARY

Having thus reconciled an apparent contradiction by establishing the spiritual nature of the *gopīs*' love for Kṛṣṇa, Śukadeva Gosvāmī proceeds with his narration. Even though the *gopīs* (*tā*) were already bewildered by the resonant sound of His flute, Kṛṣṇa, who is the most expert user of speech (*vadatāṁ śreṣṭho*) in regards to proper time, place and person, bewildered the *gopīs* even more by His use of words. *Peśair* means "with limbs" or different aspects of fine speech, including expressions designating that which is named, referenced or indirectly implied, with aspects that are varyingly "dry" (harsh) and "moist" (affectionate).

Kṛṣṇa is going to fulfill three of His desires by speaking harsh words to the *gopīs*. Kṛṣṇa thinks, "First of all I want to show the world the purity of the *gopīs*' love. Even when the *gopīs* see that I, the beloved object of their affection, am indifferent, still their affection does not decrease the slightest bit. When I meet with the *gopīs*, I will act in a contrary way. I will take up the role of the proud, headstrong lover (*vāmya-bhāva*), which is usually reserved for the woman in *śṛṅgāra-rāsa*, I will make them take up the role of the eager, submissive man (*dakṣiṇa-bhāva*).

"Further, because of the natural stiffness of young girls who are extremely shy, which makes them act just the opposite of how they actually feel, the *gopīs* are surely going to make Me listen to their interjected words meant to forestall our association. Although, as it is understood by experts in the science of *rasas*, in the same way as the breasts and other bodily parts of attractive women make a more striking impression by being hidden under clothing, similarly the inner hankerings of such women inspire more wonder when they are kept covered by their contrary behavior. When these are brashly exhibited they do not create the same effect.

"Nonetheless, the male lover sometimes desires to see the uncovered limbs of a woman he is trying to enjoy, similarly he may wish to hear her words of eagerness, which are usually hidden by external pride. But he never wants to see or hear these things in front of even his intimate friends what to speak of others."

In this way, Śrī Kṛṣṇa now wishes to see all the hidden bodily features of the beautiful young *gopīs*, and to hear their intimate words without the covering of duplicity. Thus, we can understand that Kṛṣṇa was not in association of His cowherd friends at that time.

|| 10.29.18 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

svāgataṁ vo mahā-bhāgāḥ priyaṁ kiṁ karavāṇi vaḥ

vrajasyānāmayaṁ kaccid brūtāgamana-kāraṇam

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa said: O most fortunate ladies, welcome. What may I do to please you? Is everything well in Vraja? Please tell Me the reason for your coming here.

COMMENTARY

In the loving exchanges between experienced men and women, the usual custom is that the woman will not like it and become angry if the man openly reveals his eagerness for conjugal enjoyment. With this in mind Kṛṣṇa first addresses the *gopīs* in accordance with the standard manner of mellow dealings, saying, “Welcome. Was your trip here pleasant? You are greatly fortunate (*mahābhāga*) ladies, in that in your whole lives you have never had to look misery in the face.”

These words can also have another, less affectionate meaning: “Your coming has been splendid because everything is accomplished, so now you can go home.”

Kṛṣṇa continues, “Please tell Me what gratifying hospitality I can offer to you young girls who have come to Me as I pass the night alone in this secluded forest? Kindly tell Me in simple terms what will give you pleasure, since I am indeed eager to satisfy you. Then without a doubt I will carry it out.”

Kṛṣṇa expects the *gopīs* to say, “O bold one! Aren’t You ashamed to speak to us, who are faithful to our husbands, in such an auda-cious way? Don’t You have any fear of God’s laws or of the king?”

Overwhelmed with shyness, however, the *gopīs* remain silent. Kṛṣṇa takes this to be a sign of their agreement to have physical contact, which He implied by asking them, “What can I do to please you?”

Thus Kṛṣṇa thinks, “As in union there is pleasure in the reversal of roles, so in the act of meeting contrariness is also pleasing. If these girls are not going to resort to their

normal tricks tonight, then I am going to play a few tricks of My own to conceal My own actual eagerness. Because these girls have lost control of themselves due to hearing My enchanting flute, they are acting against their natures and have become submissive."

"Therefore I should be compassionate with the gopīs, since I have not lost control of Myself. I should favor them by externally pretending to be contrary to increase the taste in the pastimes. Then later I will show My natural eagerness to enjoy with them."

Considering these ideas, Kṛṣṇa brings the conversation to the level of contrariness by inquiring from the *gopīs* with concern and apprehension. Kṛṣṇa says, "Is everything alright in Vraja? Has Indra or anyone else created a disturbance, which has filled you with fear and sent you here seeking My protection?"

Hearing this, the *gopīs*, with faces both smiling and dismayed, silently conjecture, "Is He going to play the cheater again today?" Kṛṣṇa says, "From your silence I conclude there is no disturbance. Then please tell Me, why did you come? I cannot understand."

|| 10.29.19 ||

rajany eṣā ghora-rūpā ghora-sattva-niṣevitā

pratiyāta vrajaṁ neha stheyaṁ strībhiḥ su-madhyamāḥ

TRANSLATION

This night is quite frightening, and frightening creatures are lurking about. Return to Vraja, slender-waisted girls. This is not a proper place for women.

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs* thought, "Alas, alas, even after shattering our family responsibilities, our sobriety and our shame and enjoying us day after day, and after now dragging us here by the sound of His flute, Kṛṣṇa is asking us why we have come!"

As the *gopīs* cast sidelong glances at one another, Kṛṣṇa said, "If you try to tell Me that you have come to get night-blooming flowers to use in the worship of God, and that it is these flowers you are looking at with your sidelong glances, I will have to reject your excuse as unacceptable, since neither the time, place nor persons involved are appropriate."

Or Kṛṣṇa might have said, “Even though there is abundant moonlight, this time of night is very fearsome because many snakes, scorpions and other dangerous creatures too small for you to see are lying beneath the creepers, roots and twigs. Therefore this is not a good time to pick flowers. Not only the time but also this place is unsuitable for you to gather flowers, because at night terrible creatures such as tigers are abroad here. Therefore you should go back to Vraja.”

Vraja-gopīs: “But let us just rest for a few minutes, and then we will go.”

Kṛṣṇa: “Women shouldn’t remain in this kind of place. In other words, because of the time and place, it is wrong for persons like you to stay here even for a moment.”

“O slender-waisted (*su-madhyamāḥ*) ones! You are beautiful young girls, and I am a beautiful young boy. Because you are all very chaste and I am a *brahmacārī*, as confirmed by the words *kṛṣno brahmacārī* in the *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad*, there should be no fault in our being in the same place. Nonetheless, the mind can never be trusted—neither yours nor Mine.”

Kṛṣṇa’s inner eagerness is quite obvious if we read His words between the lines, as follows: “If out of shyness you cannot tell Me the reason you’ve come, then don’t speak. I already know it anyway, so just listen as I tell it to you.”

The following hidden meaning emerges when the Sanskrit words are separated in a different way.

Kṛṣṇa: “The all-pervading moonlight has created a serene atmosphere here in the forest, devoid of fear. Hence, there are only peaceful creatures such as deer (*aghora-sattvaiḥ*), and the ferocious beasts like tigers are now harmless because of Vraja’s naturally nonviolent atmosphere. Consequently this night should not frighten you. Don’t be afraid that your husbands or other relatives may come here looking for you. Fearing the dangerous animals, they will definitely not come near this place. Please do not go back to Vraja (*na pratiyāta*), but stay here in My company (*iha stheyaṁ*).”

Vraja-gopīs: “Will you keep any type of women with you?”

Kṛṣṇa: “Only women like you, who are young and beautiful with slender waists (*su-madhyamāḥ*), should stay here with Me and not others.”

Thus by reading the Sanskrit differently, one can see that Kṛṣṇa’s words are full of considerate as well as neglectful sentiments. In this wonderful exchange of love, Kṛṣṇa simultaneously teases and enchants the *gopīs* with His clever words.

|| 10.29.20 ||

mātaraḥ pitaraḥ putrā bhrātaraḥ patayaś ca vaḥ

vicinvanti hy apaśyanto mā kṛḍhvaṁ bandhu-sādhvasam

TRANSLATION

Not finding you at home, your mothers, fathers, sons, brothers and husbands are certainly searching for you. Don’t cause anxiety for your family members.

COMMENTARY

The Vraja-gopīs said, “Even though we are young girls meeting with You at night in a lonely forest, still no one will gossip about us, or question our chastity because we have come here together in a large group.”

“Granted,” Kṛṣṇa replies, “But your friends will be terribly worried about you, and will now be searching everywhere for you. Your mothers, fathers, sons, brothers and husbands will be looking for you. Don’t put them in anxiety. However, your children, being only two or three months of age, will not be looking because they are not expert in the skill of searching for lost persons.”

The age of their children is indicated in verse six: “They gave up feeding their babies milk” and verse twenty-two: “Go home, for the calves and children are crying.” Nonetheless, because Kṛṣṇa has caused each of the *gopīs* to forget this fact about their children, He manages to plausibly make this statement: “Don’t cause anxiety for your relatives due to their not finding you (*mā kṛḍhvaṁ bandhu-sādhvasam*).”

Taking another meaning, Kṛṣṇa says, “Don’t worry. Even while searching for you, your relatives will not be able to see you (*vicinvanti hy apaśyanto*) deep in this dense forest.

Don’t be afraid of your family members. Just spend the night here enjoying freely with Me.”

|| 10.29.21-22 ||

dṛṣṭaṁ vanaṁ kusumitaṁ rākeśa-kara-rañjitam

yamunānila-līlaijat taru-pallava-śobhitam

tad yāta mā ciraṁ goṣṭhaṁ śuśrūṣadhvaṁ patīn satīḥ

krandanti vatsā bālāś ca tān pāyayata duhyata

TRANSLATION

Now you have seen this Vṛndāvana forest, full of flowers and resplendent with the light of the full moon. You have seen the beauty of the trees, with their leaves trembling in the gentle breeze coming from the Yamunā. So now go back to the cowherd village. Don’t delay. O chaste ladies, serve your husbands and give milk to your crying babies and calves.

COMMENTARY

When the *gopīs* began looking all around in embarrassment, Kṛṣṇa said, “Oh, I understand that you have come here to see the forest.”

When the *gopīs* glanced upwards, Kṛṣṇa said, “I understand you are admiring the beauty of the forest bathed in the rays of the full moon.” When they looked towards the Yamunā, Kṛṣṇa said, “The flowering buds of the trees are trembling from the gentle touch of the breeze blowing over the Yamunā.” The implication in this statement is, “Now that your desire of seeing the forest has been fulfilled, please return home without delay.”

In text twenty-one, Kṛṣṇa might have said, “This Vṛndāvana is the best place in the universe and this is a full-moon night. Furthermore, we have the Yamunā on all sides, and there are cool, gentle, fragrant breezes blowing. These transcendental features excite (*uddīpana*) the taste for love. Since I am also here as the foremost ecstatic object of love (*viṣaya-ālambana*)— let’s now test your skill in relishing *rasas.*’’ In text twenty-two, Kṛṣṇa said, “Now that your desire to see the beauty of the forest has been fulfilled, do not delay, but go immediately. O chaste ladies! You should serve Your husbands to

help them complete their religious duties." After saying this to the married gopīs, Kṛṣṇa said to the unmarried *gopīs*, "Go milk the cows, for the calves are crying." Then to the *muni-cārī-gopīs* Kṛṣṇa said, "Your babies are crying. so go feed them milk."

The alternate explanation which follows shows Kṛṣṇa in a mood of petitioning the gopīs: "Don't leave, but rather stay here and enjoy with Me throughout the night. Don't go serve your husbands, children, mothers-in-law and other relatives. It would not be fitting for you to waste such beauty and youth, which are gifts of the creator. Nor should you milk the cows or give milk to the calves and babies. What do you, who are so full of ecstatic love for Me, have to do with these affairs?"

|| 10.29.23 ||

atha vā mad-abhisnehād bhavatyo yantritāśayāḥ

āgatā hy upapannaṁ vaḥ prīyante mayi jantavaḥ

TRANSLATION

On the other hand, perhaps you have come here out of your great love for Me, which has taken control of your hearts. This is of course quite commendable on your part, since all living entities possess natural affection for Me.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, "Oh, I have made a mistake in assuming the causes of your coming. Now I understand the cause. Your increasing affection for Me has completely subjugated your hearts and forcibly drawn you to Me. In seeing Me, this affection has been satisfied. Actually it is My natural quality that all living beings, without any endeavor, have affection for Me (*prīyante mayi jantavaḥ*). Thus your affection for Me is ordinary, just like everyone else. It is not a special kind of affection induced by Cupid."

The alternate explanation: Kṛṣṇa said, "Your intense *śṛṅgāra-prema* has forcibly brought You before Me and fully captivated My mind." Another explanation: "You girls have attracted Me to you by the ropes of your minds (*manas-yantrita*). Therefore your coming here is quite fitting, and not without good cause. All living entities have affection for Me, so what to speak of yourselves, who possess transcendental *bhāva*."

|| 10.29.24 ||

bhartuḥ śuśrūṣaṇaṁ strīṇāṁ paro dharmo hy amāyayā

tad-bandhūnāṁ ca kalyāṇaḥ prajānāṁ cānupoṣaṇam

TRANSLATION

The highest religious duty for a woman is to sincerely serve her husband, behave well toward her husband's family and take good care of her children.

COMMENTARY

The gopīs relpy, "But if we, as You say, have great love for You, then why are You repeatedly telling us to return home? It is not possible for one who is the loving subject to give up the person who is the object of that love."

Kṛṣṇa: "It is true that you are full of affection, but I must speak to uphold religious principles. Therefore, please listen as I advise you according to the scriptures. Serving the husband with complete steadiness is the wife's supreme duty (*para dharma*). You should also serve the husband's parents."

The alternate meaning is as follows:

Kṛṣṇa: "For you, the beautiful women (*strīṇām*) of Vraja, serving the husband is not your duty; it is others' duty (*para dharma*). For the scriptures say:

> *vidharmaḥ para-dharmaś ca ābhāsa upamā chalaḥ*
>
> *adharma-śākhāḥ pañcemā dharma-jño 'dharmavat tyajet*
>
> There are five branches of irreligion, 1) irreligion [*vidharma*], 2) religious principles for which one is unfit [*para-dharma*], 3) pretentious religion [*ābhāsa*], 4) analogical religion [*upa-dharma*] 5) cheating religion [*chala-dharma*]. One who is aware of real religious life must abandon these five as irreligious. (SB 7.15.12)

"Since I am Viṣṇu and you are all Vaiṣṇavas, worshiping Me alone is your proper religious duty. Anything else is simply irreligious (*para-dharma*) and therefore not your duty. According to the verse: *dharmān santyajya yaḥ sarvān māṁ bhajeta sa tu sattamaḥ* (SB 11.11.32), the best activity is to give up all other duties (*dharmas*) and worship Me."

|| 10.29.25 ||

duḥśīlo durbhago vṛddho jaḍo rogy adhano 'pi vā

patiḥ strībhir na hātavyo lokepsubhir apātakī

TRANSLATION

Women who desire a good destination in the next life should never abandon a husband who has not fallen from his religious standards, even if he is obnoxious, unfortunate, old, unintelligent, sickly or poor.

COMMENTARY

The Vraja-gopīs replied, “How can we, who have such affection for You, serve husbands who are unappealing, unfavorable and unsuitable?”

Kṛṣṇa: “If your husbands are not of good character, but not sinful, then you should still serve them. For the scriptures say: *patim tv apatitaṁ bhajet,* ‘One should serve the husband who is not fallen.’ (SB 7.11.28) In other words, a fallen husband should be abandoned because he will be a cause of the wife’s own falldown.”

The word *lokepsubhir* means “by those who want the happiness of achieving the same planets as their husbands in their next lives.”

The alternate explanation: Kṛṣṇa said, “Husbands should not be rejected by women who are concerned with the insignificant reputation and happiness found in this world and the next. But because you *gopīs* have already rejected both worlds, and are instead frolicking in the vast ocean of enjoying My sweetness, from the very beginning you have given up the service of your husbands.”

|| 10.29.26 ||

asvargyam ayaśasyaṁ ca phalgu kṛcchraṁ bhayāvaham

jugupsitaṁ ca sarvatra hy aupapatyaṁ kula-striyaḥ

TRANSLATION

For a woman from a respectable family, petty adulterous affairs are always condemned. They bar her from heaven, ruin her reputation and bring her difficulty and fear.

COMMENTARY

This verse inspired the following dialogue:

Kṛṣṇa: “You good girls have ordinary affection for Me by your very natures, but any special affection which is contrary to the principles of religion should be given up. Illicit connections do not lead to Svargaloka (*asvargyam*)”

Vraja-gopīs: “We do not care for Svargaloka.”

Kṛṣṇa: “But it will also destroy your reputation (*ayaśasyaṁ*).”

Vraja-gopīs: “We don’t care for reputation.”

Kṛṣṇa: “You are speaking falsely” (*phalgu mithyaiva*).”

Vraja-gopīs: “No! What we are saying is not false, because we consider it to be of the utmost importance.”

Kṛṣṇa: “Such affairs are troublesome and full of difficulties (*krcchraṁ*) due to the prohibitions of your husbands and others.”

Vraja-gopīs: “That trouble is rather the cause of the greatest happiness for girls like us who are full of *rāga*. This is confirmed in the *śāstra*: *vāmatā durlabhatvaṁ ca, strīṇāṁ ya ca nivāraṇā, tad eva pañca-bāṇasya, manye paramam āyudham*, ‘Contrariness, difficulty of attainment and rejection by women, I consider Kāmadeva’s greatest weapons.’” (*Prīti-sandarbha* Anuccheda 279)

Kṛṣṇa: “This creates fear (*bhayāvaham*) for the body and for one’s next life on account of its being forbidden both by worldly custom and by scriptures.”

Vraja-gopīs: “How can that be? This so-called fear is rather a foundation for experiencing *rasas*, as stated in scripture:

yatra niṣedha-viśeṣaḥ, su-durlabhatvaṁ ca yan, mṛgākṣīṇām

tatraiva nāgarāṇāṁ, nirbharam āsajjate hṛdayam

> "When love is forbidden and the doe-eyed beloved is difficult to attain, then the passionate lover's heart becomes very attached to his beloved." (*Prīti-sandarbha* Anuccheda 279)

Kṛṣṇa: "In all times and places, adulterous affairs (*aupapatyam*) are always condemned (*jugupsitaṁ*) for respectable women. Even if you readily consent to bear all condemnation to fulfill your desires, how can I do anything that will cause you, the objects of My love, to become condemned. Therefore I say, please return to Vraja."

The alternate interpretation is as follows.

Kṛṣṇa: "Everywhere in the world illicit affairs are condemned. But you *gopīs* have heard from the mouth of Garga that I am equal to Nārāyaṇa. Thus there is nothing contemptible in having Me as a paramour, since I am the Supreme Personality of Godhead, I transcend ordinary auspicious and inauspicious activities."

|| 10.29.27 ||

śravaṇād darśanād dhyānān mayi bhāvo 'nukīrtanāt

na tathā sannikarṣeṇa pratiyāta tato gṛhān

TRANSLATION

Transcendental love for Me arises by the devotional processes of hearing about Me, seeing My Deity form, meditating on Me and faithfully chanting My glories. The same result is not achieved by mere physical proximity. So please go back to your homes.

COMMENTARY

The Vraja-gopīs replied, "Why do You have such thoughts. We did not come for physical contact with You. Rather, we understand from the words of Garga Muni, that You are Nārāyaṇa Himself. Thus, we have come with the desire to attain devotion to You. Therefore, let us stay here tonight and serve Your lotus feet."

Fearing this statement, Kṛṣṇa speaks this verse, “It is well known that the pure devotees do not even desire the perfections of *sāmīpya* (transcendental wealth), *sālokya* (residence on the same planet) or other benefits, but rather they desire to always hear and chant about the Lord. As devotees you must have heard about this.”

The alternate meaning is: “The processes such as hearing about Me do not give rise to intense conjugal love [*bhāva*] as much as direct contact with Me. Therefore do not go home, but go to the place with no houses, the groves.”

|| 10.29.28 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

iti vipriyam ākarṇya gopyo govinda-bhāṣitam

viṣaṇṇā bhagna-saṅkalpāś cintām āpur duratyayām

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Hearing these unpleasant words spoken by Govinda, the gopīs became morose. Their great hopes were frustrated and they felt insurmountable anxiety.

COMMENTARY

Govinda means one who enjoys playing with words (*gaḥ vindate*). *Bhāṣitam* indicates manifest verbal expression. Taking the external meaning of Govinda’s words, the gopīs thought they indicated His lack of affection and thus they felt dejected. Even though they could fully understand with their intelligence that Kṛṣṇa’s unspoken words (*avyakta-vākyam*) were actually favorable.

The *gopīs* could not see a reason for Kṛṣṇa’s rough words, and they were doubtful of the hidden affection in His unspoken words. Due to the feelings of humility which arose from their *sthāyi-bhāva*, the *gopīs* became morose and lost in thought; “That person for whom we have neglected everything—our husbands and parents’ families, our religious duties, our gravity, fear and shame—-is now neglecting us because we are not good enough for Him.”

Seeing their aspirations smashed to pieces, the *gopīs* became very anxious, thinking, “Should we make a show of very humbly holding Kṛṣṇa’s feet and crying piteously, begging to remain here? Or should we try our best to remain sober, and feigning aloofness return to Vraja, and somehow force our minds to stay grave? Or perhaps we should just give up our lives, either in His presence or else secretly by drowning in the Yamunā or by some other means? But if we end our lives, how will we be able to see

Kṛṣṇa's sweet face again? Then again how will we be able, as He has ordered us, to eat the vomit of service to our husbands and other relatives? How can we maintain ourselves, where will we go and what will we do?"

The *gopīs* were like *cātakī* birds upon whom Kṛṣṇa poured the poison of His flute's vibration. Becoming overwhelmed, the *gopīs* trusted Him and willingly drank that poison without hesitation. Did Kṛṣṇa suddenly give up His normal quality of being easily approachable?

|| 10.29.29 ||

kṛtvā mukhāny ava śucaḥ śvasanena śuṣyad

bimbādharāṇi caraṇena bhuvaḥ likhantyaḥ

asrair upātta-masibhiḥ kuca-kuṅkumāni

tasthur mṛjantya uru-duḥkha-bharāḥ sma tūṣṇīm

TRANSLATION

Their heads hanging down and their heavy, sorrowful breathing drying up their reddened lips, the gopīs scratched the ground with their toes. Tears flowed from their eyes, carrying their kajjala and washing away the vermilion smeared on their breasts. Thus they stood, silently bearing the burden of their unhappiness.

COMMENTARY

This verse expresses what the *gopīs* experienced in their anxiety. Their lowered heads indicate the *gopīs*' shame. The *gopīs* felt, "We gave up our natural shyness at the invitation of *prema*, but now again shyness has returned. *Prema* made us cast away our shyness and such *prema* is praiseworthy. *Prema* is defined as that which controls the object of one's love. If Kṛṣṇa, the object of our love, has not been conquered by our love, then our love must not be genuine. If that is the fact, then what is the purpose of our abandoning all shyness?"

In this way the Vraja-gopīs felt remorse and embarrassment, which was expressed in their faces. Their reddish lips were drying up because of the hot breathing that arose from their lamentation. When the hot sun dries ripe red bimba fruits, dark spots appear on them and they grow soft. The beautiful lips of the *gopīs* similarly changed in appearance.

The sign of their shame is indicated by their scratching on the earth with their left big toes. The *gopīs* thought, “O mother earth, please open up so that we can enter within you.”

The *gopīs*’ sorrow and remorse are further described: The *gopīs*’ tears mixed with their *kajjala*, and fell in two parallel lines to smear the *kuṅkuma* on their breasts. It was as if the increasing torment of separation, like a saw, was cutting the *gopīs* in two with those black lines. By using the plural form in the word *asraiḥ* (tears) and the present tense in the word *mṛjantyaḥ* (washing away) indicates that excessive tears were flowing.

It can be surmised, though it has not been stated, that all these tears did not soak their inner garments. This is because the rivers of tears from their eyes and the fire of remorse raging in their hearts started a war opposing the functions of wetting and drying up. Overcome with great sadness, the *gopīs* stood silently (*tūṣṇim*). Because they could not bear the burden of sorrow, they began to lose consciousness. Thus they stood still like lifeless puppets.

|| 10.29.30 ||

preṣṭhaṁ priyetaram iva pratibhāṣamāṇaṁ

kṛṣṇaṁ tad-artha-vinivartita-sarva-kāmāḥ

netre vimṛjya ruditopahate sma kiñcit
saṁrambha-gadgada-giro ’bruvatānuraktāḥ

TRANSLATION

Although Kṛṣṇa was their beloved, and although they had abandoned all other objects of desire for His sake, He had been speaking to them unfavorably. Nonetheless, they remained unflinching in their attachment to Him. Stopping their crying, they wiped their eyes and began to speak, their voices stammering with agitation.

COMMENTARY

“O *gopīs*, what is the use of crying in the forest? Why don’t you just put a smile on your faces and return home.” As if Kṛṣṇa was shouting this in their ears, the *gopīs* woke up from their dazed state and began to plead with Kṛṣṇa in these verses.

The gopīs addressed Kṛṣṇa as *preṣṭham* (beloved) on account of their previously having had frequent physical contact with Him. Yet still, without any reason, Kṛṣṇa was now speaking as if just the opposite of a beloved (*priyetaram*), harshly saying such unfavorable things as "You should just go serve your husbands." This would be impossible because for Kṛṣṇa's sake the gopīs had put aside all objects of material pleasure in such a thorough way that they could never again have any relation with them.

The phrase *sarva kāmāḥ nivartita* indicates that the *gopīs* did not have even a trace of material lust or desire. Their desire to please Kṛṣṇa was not based on *kāma*, selfish material desire. That is Śukadeva Gosvāmī's intention by using *sarva* in this phrase.

The statement that the *gopīs* rubbed their eyes which had been blinded with tears implies they were thinking; "Now our end has come. Let us take a good look at Kṛṣṇa's lotus face before we die."

The *gopīs* were agitated, thinking, "Alas, alas! Even though we were supposedly dear to Kṛṣṇa and have not committed any offense, how could He bring us to the stage of death?" If it is imagined that the *gopīs* were not upset, but rather thought, "Because we have no suitable beauty or qualities, we are not fit to associate physically with Kṛṣṇa. Let us simply give Him up," Śukadeva Gosvāmī states to the contrary that their voices were stammering with agitation.

It may be said that in either case we deduce that the *gopīs* lacked pure love of Godhead, and thus should have desisted. This objection, however, is refuted by the word (*anuraktāḥ*), implying that those who are blinded by ecstatic attraction (*anurāga*) cannot tolerate logical arguments. In other words, the *gopīs* were totally saturated with intense love for Kṛṣṇa, and were thus beyond any mundane considerations.

|| 10.29.31 ||

śrī-gopya ūcuḥ

maivaṁ vibho 'rhati bhavān gadituṁ nṛ-śaṁsaṁ

santyajya sarva-viṣayāṁs tava pāda-mūlam

bhaktā bhajasva duravagraha mā tyajāsmān

devo yathādi-puruṣo bhajate mumukṣūn

TRANSLATION

The beautiful gopīs said: O all-powerful one, You should not speak in this cruel way. Do not reject us, who have renounced all material enjoyment to render devotional service to Your lotus feet. Reciprocate with us, O stubborn one, just as the primeval Lord, Śrī Nārāyaṇa, reciprocates with His devotees in their endeavors for liberation.

COMMENTARY

"Kṛṣṇa is instructing us in religious principles, while He Himself indulges in all kinds of sinful activity." With this intention the *gopīs* speak this verse.

The *gopīs* said, "You should not speak such cruel words, since You are the son of Nanda Mahārāja, who is famous everywhere for his religiousness." Rather, the *gopīs* imply, "Only someone who has a reputation among everyone as a murderer might properly speak like this." The *Amara-kośa* Sanskrit dictionary says *nṛ-śaṁsaṁ* means "murderous" or "cruel."

The *gopīs* continued, "Though we are numbering in the millions, You have fired Your arrow-like words upon all of us, so that we will now give up our bodies and go to the abode of Yamarāja, rather than the cowherd village You have advised us to return to. You, on the other hand, can go back to Vraja, taking with You the sinful reactions for murdering millions of women. If You don't want to be implicated in the sinful reaction of killing women then You should reciprocate with us, who have given up everything to serve Your lotus feet." By using the phrase *sarva-viṣayāṁs* (all sense objects) instead of *anya-viṣayā* (other sense objects), the *gopīs* indicate that the physical association of Kṛṣṇa is not an object of sense gratification.

"But," Kṛṣṇa may ask the *gopīs*, "My dear desirous ladies! Have you come here to worship Me because your husbands have not satisfied your lust?"

Vraja-gopīs: "O *duravagraha* (stubborn one)!" The famous grammarian Pāṇini says *avagraho vrsṭi pratibandhaḥ*, "The proper usage of the word *avagraha* is to mean 'the stopping of rain.'" Thus the word *duravagraha* can only be explained as metaphorically comparing Kṛṣṇa to something else, namely a rain cloud, which is faulty for not providing rain. This explanation is further corroborated by the presence of the prefix *dur*.

Thus we get the meaning, "O cloud that rains only poison. Even though You are far away, You, the Kṛṣṇa cloud, are the friend of us *cātakī* birds. But today You happen to be raining poison. If, because of drought (*avagraha*), You are not giving rain, then go ahead and don't give rain. We shall instead drink the poison You rain down and die. But we will

not drink the water of the lakes or any other reservoir, even though they are close by. Indeed You know that this is our nature. Consequently please do not reject us, if You have any sense of gratitude at all."

Kṛṣṇa: "O *gopīs*! The *cātakīs* depends on the cloud, as you have said, but the cloud does not depend on the *cātakīs*. For the cloud, it does not matter whether the *cātakī* birds live or die."

Vraja-gopīs: "All right, but You are not a lifeless cloud! Rather You are the most exalted of chivalrous persons, just like Nārāyaṇa Himself. (They indicate this by the word *deva*). Therefore You should act as Nārāyaṇa acts. Nārāyaṇa reciprocates with those who have given up everything by awarding liberation, because He is under the control of His devotee. But You do not reciprocate with us, who have renounced all kinds of sense gratification for Your sake."

|| 10.29.32 ||

yat paty-apatya-suhṛdām anuvṛttir aṅga

strīṇāṁ sva-dharma iti dharma-vidā tvayoktam

astv evam etad upadeśa-pade tvayīśe

preṣṭho bhavāṁs tanu-bhṛtāṁ kila bandhur ātmā

TRANSLATION

Our dear Kṛṣṇa, as an expert in religion You have advised us that the proper religious duty for women is to faithfully serve their husbands, children and other relatives. We agree that this principle is valid, but actually this service should be rendered to You. After all, O Lord, You are the dearmost friend of all embodied souls. You are their most intimate relative and indeed their very Self.

COMMENTARY

This verse is spoken by some of the more guileless *gopīs* hoping to defeat Kṛṣṇa with His own statements.

The Vraja-gopīs said, “You have said that a woman’s duty is to serve her husband and other relatives. This remains valid as far as it applies, and we have no argument against this. We have been doing that all the time.”

Kṛṣṇa asks, “In what way?”

Vraja-gopīs: “We are always engaged in serving You, the originator of instructions on *dharma* meant for us. This is according to the reasoning that first one should serve the *ācārya* who teaches *dharma*, and then one should execute the instructions given. The scriptures state that only by following the *ācārya* without duplicity can one’s religious duties be successfully prosecuted. Furthermore, if the *ācārya* is the Supreme Lord Himself, how much more we should follow? On account of Your being the Supreme Personality of Godhead, You are also the Soul of all embodied beings (*tanu-bhṛtām*). On account of Your being the Supreme Soul, You are also the dearmost, and because of being the dearmost You are one’s true relative.

“In other words, the scriptures say that the wife should serve the Paramātmā who resides within one’s husband and others. When the Paramātmā leaves, the body is taken out of the house and burned on the river bank. Therefore by following You, who are the personal manifestation of the Paramātmā, the following of one’s husband and other relatives is automatically accomplished. What need do we have of other husbands and relatives, who are devoid of their souls because they stand in opposition to our following You, and who have thus already had their faces burned in the funeral pyre?”

The preliminary manifestations of pure love of God (*pūrva-prema*) cover a devotee’s awareness of Kṛṣṇa’s Godhood. Therefore, one may question, since the gopīs were certainly experiencing such *pūrva-prema*, how was it that they thought of Kṛṣṇa as God (Paramātmā)? The characteristics of *prema* mentioned in the *Nārada-pañcarātra* and other scriptures are explained in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. *Prema* constantly manifests natural symptoms, both hot and cold, which reflect the devotees’ simultaneous experience of both union with and separation from the Lord. *Prema* that is due to the waves of bliss brings about tears, shivering and other symptoms in the body.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī says in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.1.38):

> *brahmānando bhaved eṣa, cet parārdha-guṇī-kṛtaḥ,*
>
> *naiti bhakti-sukhāmbhodheḥ, paramāṇu-tulām api*

> "If *brahmānando*, the bliss of merging in the Brahman effulgence, were multiplied one hundred trillion times, it would still not equal even an atomic fragment of the ocean of transcendental bliss felt in devotional service."

This verse indicates that the bliss tasted in devotional service is infinitely greater in magnitude than the bliss of Brahman realization. The pain experienced by the *premi-bhakta* during separation (*viraha*) from Kṛṣṇa burns with more brilliance than millions of sun-rays. This all-illuminating sun of separation reveals all of Kṛṣṇa's beautiful transcendental qualities, including those related to Kṛṣṇa's opulence (*aiśvarya-guṇa*) as well as those related to His sweetness (*mādhurya-guṇa*). Thus the experience of devotion in separation does not cover any of Kṛṣṇa's qualities.

Devotion in union (*sambhoga*), on the other hand, is more pleasure-giving than millions of nectar-filled moonbeams, and reveals only those qualities of Kṛṣṇa which manifest His tasty sweetness (*mādhur-ya*). Since direct association with Kṛṣṇa is like the nectar-rays of the moon, that intoxicating nectar covers Kṛṣṇa's opulence (*aiśvarya*).

But in a case when even in union or meeting with Kṛṣṇa His opulences remain revealed; we must assume that the devotee's love is not yet mature. *Prema* shrinks or becomes less perfect during union or meeting if Kṛṣṇa's opulence (*aiśvarya*) is revealed. Although in this instance the *gopīs* are meeting with Kṛṣṇa, they are expecting separation, and thus they have a realization of Kṛṣṇa's *aiśvarya* caused by their perfectly pure love. This is the mysterious working of *prema* itself. Even when love is imperfect it reveals Kṛṣṇa's glories, then what to speak of when it is completely perfect. Thus the magnitude of the *gopīs*' experience of Kṛṣṇa's greatness is the measure of the greatness of their love.

This same idea is exemplified in Śrī Jīva Gosvāmīpāda's commentary on the history of the original King Bharata in his *Prīti-sandarbha*; "The Vraja-gopīs' ecstatic love (*prema*) for Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the most exalted love. But love mixed with awareness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's power and opulence (*aiśvarya-jñāna*) is not the most exalted."

|| 10.29.33 ||

kurvanti hi tvayi ratiṁ kuśalāḥ sva ātman

nitya-priye pati-sutādibhir ārti-daiḥ kim

tan naḥ prasīda parameśvara mā sma chindyā

āśāṁ dhṛtāṁ tvayi cirād aravinda-netra

TRANSLATION

Expert transcendentalists always direct their affection toward You because they recognize You as their true Self and eternal beloved. What use do we have for these husbands, children and relatives of ours, who simply give us trouble? Therefore, O supreme controller grant us Your mercy. O lotus-eyed one, please do not cut down our long-cherished hope to have Your association.

COMMENTARY

Some other gopīs strengthen their argument by citing the behavior of saintly persons in this verse.

Vraja-gopīs: "Anyone who develops love for You, who are endowed with the eight good qualities, is not defeated by the enemies such as lust, just as the followers of Viṣṇu are not defeated by the demons. We heard this from Garga Muni:

> *ya etasmin mahā-bhāgāḥ prītiṁ kurvanti mānavāḥ*
>
> *nārayo 'bhibhavanty etān viṣṇu-pakṣān ivāsurāḥ*
>
> "Demons cannot harm the demigods, who always have Lord Viṣṇu on their side. Similarly, any person or group attached to Kṛṣṇa is extremely fortunate. Because such persons are very much affectionate toward Kṛṣṇa, they cannot be defeated by demons like the associates of Kaṁsa (or by the internal enemies, the senses)." (SB 10.8.18)

"Those who have faith in this statement are truly intelligent, and those who are intelligent have love for You. This love is natural and eternally present in their hearts. You are the object of possession for them (*sva*), and You (*ātman*) are eternally the object of affection (*nitya-priya*) for them. Whereas the affection they have for husbands, sons and family are only conditional and therefore temporary.

"But we do not have any such affection for these relatives. They only give us misery and trouble by preventing us from meeting You. What is the need of them at all? Therefore be merciful and save our lives. You may not want to let the married *gopīs* live, but why make the unmarried gopīs cry? You already granted their desire when you stole their clothing and promised: *saṅkalpo viditaḥ sādhvyo bhavatīnāṁ mad-arcanam*... "O saintly girls I understand your vow to attain Me, and I will enjoy with you on future nights." (SB 10.22.25)

But Kṛṣṇa may reply, “I gave them mercy because of their worship of Katyayani. For what reason can I give mercy to you? You are telling Me to be merciful without good reason.”

The *gopīs* pitifully beg, “Then give us Your mercy even without any reason. O Paramesvara! You are under no one’s control but Your own, and are thus free to do anything You wish. At the very beginning of our youth when we first caught sight of You, the seed of this creeper of our hopes, known as *bhāva*, was sent by Your lotus-like eyes (*aravinda-netra*) and entered through the openings of our eyes to become planted in the field of our hearts. This creeper of desire grew by the process of hearing about Your qualities and seeing Your beautiful form.” According to the *rasa śāstra*, love develops in stages beginning with attraction by glancing, then meeting in the heart, and then anticipating desire develops.

The Vraja-gopīs continue, “That creeper has now fructified, so why, while it is affording abundant fruits to be enjoyed and will give yet more fruits to enjoy in the future, should it be cut down with the axe of Your harsh words? Surely You must know the rule that one should never cut down a full-grown tree even if it is filled with poisonous fruits.” This thought is implied by the two words *chindyā* and *cirād*.

|| 10.29.34 ||

cittaṁ sukhena bhavatāpahṛtaṁ gṛheṣu

yan nirviśaty uta karāv api gṛhya-kṛtye

pādau padaṁ na calatas tava pāda-mūlād

yāmaḥ kathaṁ vrajam atho karavāma kiṁ vā

TRANSLATION

Until today our minds were absorbed in household affairs, but You easily stole both our minds and our hands away from our housework. Now our feet won’t move one step from Your lotus feet. How can we go back to Vraja? What would we do there?

COMMENTARY

Other *gopīs* reveal their intense love by saying, “O king of thieves! We did not come here with any other purpose than to recover the treasure that You stole from us. You have stolen our minds, but unlike other thieves You did not have to make any great endeavor. You did this simply by blowing on Your flute.”

“The treasure of our minds is not some cheap thing either. Our minds were absorbed completely in our household affairs, and by stealing them the whole house has been plundered.”

The actual subtle implication of this exaggeration by the *gopīs* is: “Because our minds are not at all absorbed in our homes we don’t care if they burn down or prosper. Actually our minds are absorbed in that which brings about the perfection of all our *gṛhas* (senses or homes), and without which all our senses become useless. Thus by stealing our minds You have stolen all of our senses, including our hands, which were absorbed in household work, and also (*uta*) our eyes and ears.”

Kṛṣṇa: “But My dear *gopīs*, just go home for now. Let Me consider the situation for a day or two, and then I will return your minds.”

Vraja-gopīs: “Our feet refuse to move even one step. Please give back our minds, accept us and then we will go.

|| 10.29.35 ||

siñcāṅga nas tvad-adharāmṛta-pūrakeṇa

hāsāvaloka-kala-gīta-ja-hṛc-chayāgnim

no ced vayaṁ virahajāgny-upayukta-dehā

dhyānena yāma padayoḥ padavīṁ sakhe te

TRANSLATION

Dear Kṛṣṇa, please pour the nectar of Your lips upon the fire within our hearts—a fire You ignited with Your smiling glances and the sweet song of Your flute. If You do not, we will consign our bodies to the fire of separation from You, O friend, and thus like yogīs attain to the abode of Your lotus feet by meditation.

COMMENTARY

At this time Kṛṣṇa thought, “Ah! When I desired to see the naked bodies of these beautiful young girls other than at the time of intimate association, I did so on the day I stole their clothing. Though now I want to hear them speak shamelessly like they do at the time of our directly enjoying conjugal nectar, I cannot hear them speak thus.”

“I have made them mad with the intoxicating music of My flute, and totally bewildered them with My clever words. I have even stolen their minds, by depending on which their shyness, discretion, sense of religious duty and soberness were sustained. But even after all that, they are still speaking with all shyness, not even now revealing their inner thoughts.”

While Kṛṣṇa was thus thinking, some of the leading *gopīs*, whose normal natures had become overturned by the predominant effect of the *sañcāri-bhāva* (transitory emotion) known as *unmāda* (transcendental madness), began to speak in a contradictory way.

Gopī: “O Kṛṣṇa! Please extinguish with the flood of nectar from Your lips the fire of lust in our hearts that has burst into flames from Your smiling glance and sonorous flute.”

The *gopīs* are implying that if the same person who has started a blazing fire regains his common sense and puts it out, he can cancel the effect of his offensive act. Otherwise he who has set the fire must accept the sinful reactions which accrue to such crimes as arson. Although the word *kāmam* (lust) is not used here, it is indirectly implied by the use of the word *hṛt-śaya* (sleeping in the heart). In other words, the gopīs are saying, “Our lust is lying dormant within our hearts and no one but You can awaken it.”

Gopī: “With the sound of the flute You have entered our hearts through our ears and awakened the dormant fire of our desire. Then with the ghee of Your smile and the honey of Your glance, as well as with the wind of the flutes’ melodious song, You inflamed that fire, threatening to devour our life airs.

“Therefore if You are afraid of the sinful reaction for starting such a fire, You should extinguish it. After all it is no labor for You to either incite it or extinguish it, since it is Your smiling glance which inflames that fire, and the nectar of Your lips that puts it out. Both these things reside in Your moon-like face. We have often seen the play of this mischievous prince, lighting and extinguishing fires. It is not just today that You are playing the game of starting fires.”

Kṛṣṇa: “This smiling glance and sweet flute-song of Mine arise spontaneously. If they have inflamed you young girls, then please tell Me how much of the remedy, which is the nectar of My lips, should I administer?”

Gopī: “Yes, after You have murdered thousands of other women, You may feel some remorse for Your crime and Your impudence may subside. If You do not extinguish the fire, we will consign our bodies to the fire of separation. While our bodies burn, we will meditate like *yogis* and instantly attain Your lotus feet.”

“We surmise that we have not been accepted by You because we did not perform any pious acts in our previous lives. Therefore, for the sake of doing austerities we will not resort to the external fires of this world. Rather, we will utilize the fire of desire and separation from You which already reside in our hearts. Of the two, the extremely powerful fire of separation has smothered the sleeping fire of our desire. Therefore, we will offer our life airs as oblations into that fire of separation with the following prayer:

“Oh fire of separation (*viraha-agni*) from Kṛṣṇa! We now throw our life airs into you with the aspiration of attaining the touch of Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet. Without anyone’s notice, place our bodies on the path in such a way that Kṛṣṇa’s feet will step on our breasts instead of the ground (*padayoḥ padavīṁ*, pathway for His feet). With the touch of Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet, the fire of lust in our hearts will subside and our desire will be fulfilled.”

Another gopī addresses Kṛṣṇa: “Moreover, You will receive pleasure from touching our breasts with Your feet, even if You don’t want it. O friend, and though You do not desire it, You will get relief from Your sin of killing women, as we will be satisfied by the touch of Your feet on our breasts. If You torment Your girlfriends, then how can we refrain from tormenting You, our boyfriend? But the pain of remorse we make You feel will spoil our love, and will simply reflect back on us a million times magnified. Alas! What can we do, since this shame has been forced upon us by Providence? “Therefore, O You who disregard material consequences! O ocean of mercy! Why are You sowing the seed of the creeper of Your own remorse? Why are You making us eat its fruit? Give up your stubbornness and accept us.” In this way there are many inferences from this verse.

|| 10.29.36 ||

yarhy ambujākṣa tava pāda-talaṁ ramāyā

datta-kṣaṇaṁ kvacid araṇya-jana-priyasya

asprākṣma tat-prabhṛti nānya-samakṣam añjaḥ

sthātuṁs tvayābhiramitā bata pārayāmaḥ

TRANSLATION

O lotus-eyed one, the goddess of fortune considers it a festive occasion whenever she touches the soles of Your lotus feet. You are very dear to the residents of the forest, and therefore we will also touch those lotus feet. From

that time on we will be unable even to stand in the presence of any other man, for we will have been fully satisfied by You.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “Then you should go to your respective husbands, and they can extinguish the fire of your desire with the touch of their lips.” To this the gopīs reply, “O lotus-eyed one (*ambujākṣa*)! From the moment we saw Your lotus eyes, we have been residing there like honeybees.”

Here the *gopīs* reveal a kind of *pūrva-rāga* called “*lajjā-ccheda*” (breaking the shyness). This is one kind of *sambhoga*, which has three features described in Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī’s *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi*, *Śṛṅgāra-bheda-prakaraṇa*, Text 66: *nayana-prītiḥ prathamaṁ, cintā-saṅgas tato ’tha saṅkalpaḥ*—1. *nayana-prīti* (falling in love by seeing the beloved) 2. *cintā* (thinking of the beloved) 3. *saṅkalpa* (deciding to pursue the beloved).

Gopīs: “Seeing beautiful Your eyes has invoked our initial desire. But what will happen the moment that You place Your lotus feet upon our breasts in the groves of Govardhana or elsewhere? Just the touch of Your feet, which are desired even by Laksmī, Nārāyaṇa’s dearmost consort in Vaikuṇṭha, can create a festival full of desires for intimate pleasure.”

The *gopīs* understood this point by hearing from Garga Muni about the Nagapatnis, who said, *yad-vāñchayā śrīr lalanācarat tapo, vihāya kāmān su-ciraṁ dhṛta-vratā*: “To attain Your lotus feet, the goddess of fortune (Laksmī) performed austerities for centuries, giving up all other desires and taking austere vows.” (SB 10.16.36)

Gopīs: “Therefore these feet will also create a festival full of desires for us, who dwell in the forest. Then is it so surprising that we cowherd women would not be attracted to them?”

Kṛṣṇa: “What is your qualification to achieve the object which Laksmī hankered for?”

The Vraja-gopīs reply to Kṛṣṇa’s question in this verse. “Your feet are very dear to the cowherds who dwell in the forests (*aranya-jana-priyasya*). From the very moment that our breasts touch Your lotus feet, we will not be able to stand in the presence of our husbands. Just the sight of our husbands will fill us with contempt. Furthermore, not only will we touch Your feet, but we will be enjoyed in all ways by You (*abhi-ramitā*). You will bless us with the highest limits of enjoyment, and we will become completely fulfilled. Therefore, please do not send us away.” It is understood that the *gopīs* cried out pitifully with these words while falling at Kṛṣṇa’s feet.

|| 10.29.37 ||

śrīr yat padāmbuja-rajaś cakame tulasyā

labdhvāpi vakṣasi padaṁ kila bhṛtya-juṣṭam

yasyāḥ sva-vīkṣaṇa utānya-sura-prayāsas

tadvad vayaṁ ca tava pāda-rajaḥ prapannāḥ

TRANSLATION

Goddess Lakṣmī, whose glance is sought after by the demigods with great endeavor, has achieved the unique position of always remaining on the chest of her Lord, Nārāyaṇa. Still, she desires the dust of His lotus feet, even though she has to share that dust with Tulasī-devī and indeed with the Lord's many other servants. Similarly, we have approached the dust of Your lotus feet for shelter.

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs* said, "In this way You have made us Your lovers, but we desire simply the service of Your lotus feet." In this verse the *gopīs* cite the example of the goddess of fortune: "As Laksmī desires the dust from the lotus feet of Nārāyaṇa, we surrender unto the dust of Your lotus feet, since You are just like Nārāyaṇa (*tadvat*). According to Garga Muni's words. You resemble Nārāyaṇa, therefore, we must be similar to Laksmī. Though Laksmī-devī attained the topmost place on Your chest, she hankered after the dust of Your lotus feet, which is the position of a co-wife, Tulasī, and which are served by crowds of male attendants."

"Abandoning her shyness and her natural mood of a consort, Laksmī desired and accepted a position inferior to her own. Just as Laksmī desires to give up her position as the dear most to become Your menial servant, we feel likewise. Giving up all embarrassment, we desire to join Your servants like Raktaka, Patraka and others in massaging Your feet. Similarly, we are ready to accept positions lower than our own, like the Pulindas (aboriginal women) of Vṛndāvana, who rub the blades of grass tinged with the red *kuṅkuma* from Your feet on their foreheads."

"Furthermore, Lord Nārāyaṇa, being satisfied with Laksmī-devī, granted her eternal residence upon His own chest, whereas You, the crest-jewel of all skillful lovers, have not allowed us to even remain in the vicinity of the soles of Your feet for even a moment. This is a great blow to our self-esteem. If You want the fame of being considered equal to Nārāyaṇa as per Garga Ṛsi's words, You should also carry us on Your chest." (A suggestion of deep love is also hinted here by the *gopīs*.)

Anticipating that Kṛṣṇa may jokingly object saying, “Just as Goddess Laksmī is unsteady, you should also become unpredictable by going from house to house among different pious persons.”

The *gopīs* reply, “Is Laksmī fickle like a fool? She is the most steadfast of ladies. For the sake of receiving her merciful glance, which is full of motherly compassion, Brahmā and other demigods, who are like her sons, make great endeavor. Yet still she hardly ever even glances upon them. Nevertheless, by one of her *śaktīs* (potencies) Laksmī delivers whatever they desire.”

|| 10.29.38 ||

tan naḥ prasīda vṛjinārdana te ’nghri-mūlaṁ

prāptā visṛjya vasatīs tvad-upāsanāśāḥ

tvat-sundara-smita-nirīkṣaṇa-tīvra-kāma

taptātmanāṁ puruṣa-bhūṣaṇa dehi dāsyam

TRANSLATION

Therefore, O vanquisher of all distress, please show us mercy. To approach Your lotus feet we abandoned our families and homes, and we have no desire other than to serve You. Our hearts are burning with intense desires generated by Your beautiful smiling glances. O jewel among men, please make us Your maidservants.

COMMENTARY

The Vraja-gopīs said, “Giving up our families, we desire to be Your servants like the devotees of Nārāyaṇa. As You are similar to Nārāyaṇa, You should be pleased with us.”

Kṛṣṇa: “But you girls have some bad *karma* which causes suffering, and stands in the way of My favoring you. Therefore, how can you receive My mercy? Does Lord Nārāyaṇa grant His mercy to just anyone?”

Vraja-gopīs: “O one who vanquishes distress (*vṛjinārdana*)! Please remove our suffering. It is well known in the scriptures that Nārāyaṇa takes away the suffering of those who take shelter of Him. Similarly, without any ulterior desire we have renounced our homes (*visṛjya-vasatīḥ*) to take shelter of Your lotus feet.”

Kṛṣṇa: “We surmise that you must be expecting some pleasure from Me in exchange for abandoning the happiness of your family life.”

Vraja-gopīs: “Our aspiration is only to worship You (*tvad upāsanāśā*) for Your pleasure not ours.” The idea underlying the *gopīs*’ argument is as follows: If, in the course of pleasing You, we circumstantially become happy by seeing Your face, what is the fault in that?

Kṛṣṇa: “Then why are you *gopīs* improperly asking Me to extinguish the fire in your hearts?”

Vraja-gopīs: “This is not improper, it is the truth. You are the cause of that fire’s flaring up. Our souls burn with intense desires created by Your beautiful, smiling glances. To remove that fault, You should simply grant us the position of Your maidservants, rather than the status of wives.”

Śrīpada Vallabhācārya comments on this as follows: “The *gopīs* prayed for the position of maidservants, not Kṛṣṇa’s wives, because to be married Kṛṣṇa would need to have received *upanayana saṁskāra* (*brahmin* thread), which He got later in *mathurā-līlā*.”

Vraja-gopīs continue, “Thus there is no harm in our being unmarried maidens or being married to other men. For neither of these conditions preclude a relationship of servitude with You.”

Sanātana Gosvāmīpāda says in his commentary that service to the husband in married life does not give as much happiness as service to a paramour lover. This point is also corroborated in his *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*. Since being a servant is more desirable, the *gopīs* pray in this verse, “May we become Your maidservants.”

Vraja-gopīs: “Because You are a vast ocean of desires, the proper worship of You, who are a woman-hunter, by us young girls should be executed with our own bodies to bring You satisfaction. Consequently, our prayer to extinguish the fire in our hearts is actually a prayer to worship You. The fire of our lust is the chief instrument of that worship.”

Thus it is fitting that the Vraja-gopīs address Kṛṣṇa with the phrase *puruṣa-bhūṣaṇa*, “O jewel among men.” By this the *gopīs* meant to say, “O jewel of all males, please decorate our golden bodies with the dark blue gems of Your limbs.”

|| 10.29.39 ||

vīkṣyālakāvṛta-mukhaṁ tava kuṇḍala-śrī

gaṇḍa-sthalādhara-sudhaṁ hasitāvalokam

dattābhayaṁ ca bhuja-daṇḍa-yugaṁ vilokya

vakṣaḥ śriyaika-ramaṇaṁ ca bhavāma dāsyaḥ

TRANSLATION

Seeing Your face encircled by curling locks of hair, Your cheeks beautified by earrings, Your lips full of nectar, and Your smiling glance, and also seeing Your two imposing arms, which take away our fear, and Your chest, which is the only source of pleasure for the goddess of fortune, we must become Your maidservants.

COMMENTARY

In this regard Kṛṣṇa and the gopīs had the following conversation.

Kṛṣṇa: "You want to become My servants; so do I have to buy you with some payment, or are you giving yourselves freely?"

Gopīs: "Since the beginning of our youthful womanhood You have been purchasing us with a payment millions and millions of times more than enough. That payment is the precious *cintāmaṇi* jewel of Your smiling glance, which we have never heard about or seen anywhere else. Thus purchasing us, You brought us home to Your palace among the bushes of Vṛndāvana. Then You showed us Your personal treasury filled with the priceless jewels of Your beautiful bodily limbs. Indeed, Your vast wealth far surpasses the opulence of Alakā, the capital of Kuvera.

"You possess great heaps of pearls and blue emeralds set in golden ornaments shaped like *makaras* (Kṛṣṇa's shark-shaped earrings). There are many grand emerald pillars marking the hall where the goddess Laksmī sports (Kṛṣṇa's chest and arms). The floors are made of *cintāmaṇi* gems (Kṛṣṇa's face). Jewels of *nīla-nidhi* (blue sapphires) and *padma-nidhi* (rubies) cast their light in all directions (Kṛṣṇa's eyes). Thus showing us these treasures, each day You make us partake of a nectarean sight unattainable even by the demigods.

“When You put Your golden turban on Your head, Your maidservant will serve as Your valet by arranging Your hair with a comb. With Your hands You will tuck in the curls of hair under Your turban. These curls are visible only on the left and right sides of Your forehead, and they do not cover Your face. Similarly, when You place the jewel on Your turban, Your maidservant will see the locks of hair pushed to the left and right sides of Your forehead. When whenever You are being massaged with oil, or engaging in intimate pastimes we will see Your face completely covered by Your hair. Thus we, Your maidservants, will relish Your abundant sweetness with our eyes.

“What is this face like? Sometimes the ear-rings (*kuṇḍala*) are completely visible, partially visible or completely covered by locks of hair. Sometimes the earrings are stationary, slightly moving, or completely agitated. In this way Kṛṣṇa’s earrings reveal various types of beauty (*Śrī*). Whenever Kṛṣṇa smiles and laughs, His cheeks become obscured by the widened corners of His mouth. Thus the nectar that normally comes from His lips seems to be coming from His cheeks as well.

“The *cakorī* birds of the *gopīs*’ eyes have climbed upon Your cheeks to drink the nectar of Your lips. At various intimate times, however, the nectar of Your lips appear on the cheeks of the *gopīs*. Sometimes the nectar from the *gopīs*’ lips appears on Your cheeks.”

An alternate interpretation is that Kṛṣṇa’s face accents the beauty and splendor of His shimmering earrings, and His face also exhibits the nectar from His lips. All these descriptions apply to Kṛṣṇa’s face as a compound adjective (namely *kuṇḍala-srī gaṇḍa-sthalādhara-sudhaṁ*) modifying a single noun *mukhaṁ*, His face.

Gopīs: “Kṛṣṇa’s face is filled with smiling glances, which cause the blossoming of the *gopīs*’ smiles and the night-blooming lotuses.”

Kṛṣṇa: “Your husbands will not tolerate this behavior of ours. They will complain bitterly to King Kaṁsa, thus producing a fearful situation for Me and for you as well.”

Gopīs: “But Kṛṣṇa, Your two mighty arms make us fearless (*dattam abhayam*), just as they did when You held up Govardhana Hill to protect us from the pride of Mahendra. Those arms will certainly kill that beast Kaṁsa.” In this way their *sṛṅgāra-rasa* (conjugal love) is nourished by a hint of *vīrya-rasa* (chivalry).

Kṛṣṇa: “As I follow the path of *dharma*, I cannot make others’ wives My maidservants.” Pointing His index finger at Himself, Kṛṣṇa asks, “Do you understand who I am?”

Gopīs: “Yes, of course we do. You are the crest jewel of religious personalities. You may say that You refuse to make the cowherds’ wives Your maidservants, but by force You have already taken Laksmī, the wife of Nārāyaṇa, from Vaikuṇṭha and are carrying her around on Your chest. Out of modesty, she has assumed the form of a golden line and sports prominently (*śrīyaika ramanam*) on Your chest.”

“Besides, we know this for certain that within all the fourteen worlds and even above these worlds—in Vaikuṇṭhaloka, beyond this universe—You never reject any beautiful woman, no matter who she is or whom she belongs to.”

|| 10.29.40 ||

kā stry aṅga te kala-padāyata-veṇu-gīta-

sammohitārya-caritān na calet tri-lokyām

trailokya-saubhagam idaṁ ca nirīkṣya rūpaṁ

yad go-dvija-druma-mṛgāḥ pulakāny abibhran

TRANSLATION

Dear Kṛṣṇa, what woman in all the three worlds wouldn’t deviate from religious behavior when bewildered by the sweet, drawn-out melody of Your flute? Your beauty makes all three worlds auspicious. Indeed, even the cows, birds, trees and deer manifest the ecstatic symptom of bodily hair standing on end when they see Your beautiful form.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “Since You have given up as dead the path of duty, what effect will that have on other women who are faithful to their husbands? You will corrupt them by the logic of the statement, ‘A shameless person contaminates not only himself, but also everyone else he contacts.’ On seeing this splendid golden line which appears by chance on My chest, you insulted Laksmī herself, who is the most excellent of chaste women. Why are you offending Laksmī-devī?”

Gopīs: “We are not blaming Laksmī-devī at all. Rather it is You who have been sent by the Creator to destroy the religious principles th-roughout the three worlds.” The *gopīs* say this with angry naughtiness.

Gopīs: “O Kṛṣṇa, all women are bewildered by the sweet tones of Your flute.” Another version of this verse reads *kala padāyata murcchitena* which means “bewildered by the particular kind of drawn out melody of Your flute.”

“Thus a woman is not herself at fault, but rather the flute-song You have produced is to blame. Not only does she deviate from proper Āryan behavior and her own prescribed duty of faithfulness to her husband, but she becomes deviant in all respects. Thus, You are the cause of her abandoning religious principles.”

“Not only do You have the bad quality of destroying our *dharma*, but Your beautiful form enchants all the people in both the spiritual and material world and destroys their *dharma* as well. This is no ones’ fault except Yours. The natural lust of women cannot be not said to be the cause of their bewilderment, because all moving and non-moving entities are also bewitched by Your form and flute song.”

“Therefore, what more can be said about this? Even the most expert knowers of the truth are astonished by Your fabulous flute song and gorgeous divine form. Lastly we understand that You also amaze Your own self.” This point is mentioned by Śukadeva Gosvāmī in the *Bhāgavatam* (3.2.12): *vismāpanaṁ-svasya*, “Kṛṣṇa even produces wonder for Himself.” [In chapter twenty-one, *veṇu-gīta* (song of the flute), it states that Brahmā, Indra and Śiva were totally enthralled by Kṛṣṇa’s flute.]

|| 10.29.41 ||

vyaktaṁ bhavān vraja-bhayārti-haro ’bhijāto

devo yathādi-puruṣaḥ sura-loka-goptā

tan no nidhehi kara-paṅkajam ārta-bandho

tapta-staneṣu ca śiraḥsu ca kiṅkarīṇām

TRANSLATION

Clearly You have taken birth in this world to relieve the fear and distress of the people of Vraja, just as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the primeval Lord, protects the domain of the demigods. Therefore, O friend of the distressed, kindly place Your lotus hand on Your maidservants’ heads and burning breasts.

COMMENTARY

The Vraja-gopīs said, “Enough of this show of cleverness! Now stop trying to hide Your true feelings.’’ This statement is made directly without hidden intentions (*vyaktaṁ*).

“You removed the Vrajavasis’ fear of the forest fire, and their distress (*arti-haraḥ*) due to the rain storms. You appeared in the house of Nanda from the womb of Yaśodā (*abhi jata*), just as Nārāyaṇa took birth from the womb of Aditi (*devo yathādi-puruṣa*). Everyone in the world knows this fact. But if millions of these gopīs die today, their parents will experience great grief, thinking, ‘How have these girls, for whom there was only one worshipable God, met their death in the forest?’ They will feel very fearful over the fact that in just one day they all died in the forest.”

Kṛṣṇa: “Then what do you want?”

Gopīs: “O friend of the distressed! Please place Your lotus hands on our burning breasts.”

Kṛṣṇa: “But then My tender hands will get burned.”

Gopīs: “Though the breasts of Your servants (*kinkarīṇām*) are burning, these instruments of service will not burn Your hands, just as the scorching sun does not cause pain to the lotus. Rather they will fill Your hands with pleasure. Please place Your hand on our heads, and bless us that in the future we will have no fear of rejection by You.”

|| 10.29.42 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

iti viklavitaṁ tāsāṁ śrutvā yogeśvareśvaraḥ

prahasya sa-dayaṁ gopīr ātmārāmo ’py arīramat

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Smiling upon hearing these despondent words from the gopīs, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the supreme master of all masters of mystic yoga, mercifully enjoyed with them, although He is self-satisfied.

COMMENTARY

Having heard the words expressing their dejection, and having His own desires fulfilled, Kṛṣṇa smiled and said, “O My beloveds! Whenever we meet, you always show obstinacy. Today on this one occasion I boldly exhibited a little obstinacy, but actually even that

bears the seed of My magnanimity toward you. Becoming disturbed like this, you have thrown away your modesty, and therefore I am smiling. In conquering you, I have turned the vast ocean of your obstinacy into a drop of water."

"O girls, who think yourselves the best of intelligent persons, you should acknowledge your defeat and give up the shyness and sobriety which are checking you. You should become a garland of gold and jewels around My neck, and let Me drink the nectar of your sweet lips. For a long time I have been extremely thirsty for this."

Even though Kṛṣṇa is self-satisfied, He derived great pleasure from joking affectionately with His beloveds. Just see how astonishing is the love of the *gopīs*! In the *ātmārāmāś ca munayo* verse of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (1.7.10), the line *ittham-bhūta-guṇo hariḥ* glorifies the magnificent qualities of Kṛṣṇa. In the present verse the greatness of the *gopīs*' *prema* is glorified. Because the *gopīs* are the *hlādinī-śakti* (manifestations of Kṛṣṇa's internal pleasure potency) arising directly from Kṛṣṇa, they are also the *ātma* (manifestations of His own self) of Kṛṣṇa. Therefore it was possible for Kṛṣṇa to sport with them.

Thus although Kṛṣṇa is self-satisfied (*ātmārāmā*), He derives more joy from His devotees than even from His own self as confirmed in His own words: "My dear Uddhava, neither Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa, the goddess of fortune nor indeed My own self are as dear to Me as you are." (SB 11.14.15)

"O best of the *brāhmaṇas*, without saintly persons for whom I am the only destination, I do not desire to enjoy My transcendental bliss and My supreme opulences." (SB 9.4.64)

Since the Vraja-gopīs are the supreme amongst all His devotees, Kṛṣṇa, though He is self satisfied, enjoys with them in order to increase His bliss. But, it may be objected, since such authoritative sources as the *Krama-dīpikā* state that there were millions of *gopīs* in the *rāsa* dance, how was it possible for one man at one time in one place to enjoy with many millions of ladies?

In replying, we must remember that Saubhari Ṛṣi and others were masters of mystic *yoga*, and personalities like Rudra were their masters. Saubhari expanded his body into fifty duplicate images in order to enjoy with fifty princesses. Kṛṣṇa is *yogeśvareśvara*, the topmost master of all masters of mystic *yoga*. Therefore, Kṛṣṇa is so unique that He need not expand Himself to enjoy millions of *gopīs*. This is confirmed in the words of

Nārada Muni: “It is quite amazing that in a single body Lord Kṛṣṇa simultaneously married sixteen thousand women, each in a separate palace.” (SB 10.69.2)

|| 10.29.43 ||

tābhiḥ sametābhir udāra-ceṣṭitaḥ

priyekṣaṇotphulla-mukhībhir acyutaḥ

udāra-hāsa-dvija-kunda-dīdhatir

vyarocataiṇāṅka ivoḍubhir vṛtaḥ

TRANSLATION

Among the assembled gopīs, the infallible Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared just like the moon surrounded by stars. He whose activities are so magnanimous made their faces blossom with His affectionate glances, and His broad smiles revealed the effulgence of His jasmine-bud-like teeth.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa is called *udāra-ceṣṭitaḥ*, one with magnanimous activities, because by His pastimes (*ceṣṭitaḥ* means *līlā*) Kṛṣṇa generously (*udāra*) gave conjugal pleasure to the *gopīs*, and to the *bhāva-bhaktas* who hear these pastimes Kṛṣṇa liberally gives *prema*. Kṛṣṇa is called *acyuta*, infallible, because without failure He enjoyed individually with each and every gopī. Kṛṣṇa’s smiles (*hāsa*) were *udāra*, meaning either that they liberally gave joy to the *gopīs*, or they were broad revealing His teeth, which are brilliant white like jasmine flowers.

|| 10.29.44 ||

upagīyamāna udgāyan vanitā-śata-yūthapaḥ

mālāṁ bibhrad vaijayantīṁ vyacaran maṇḍayan vanam

TRANSLATION

As the gopīs sang His praises, that leader of hundreds of women sang loudly in reply. He moved among them, wearing His Vaijayantī garland, beautifying the Vṛndāvana forest.

COMMENTARY

Rādhā, Candrāvalī and other gopīs began to sing (*upagīyamāna*) in an especially pleasing way (*upa*) with *rāga*, *svara* (melody) and *tāla* (beat). They sang the following song in "*tīn tāla*" (three beats):

> *vadanaṁ madhuma-sadanaṁ, calanaṁ dalanaṁ kandra-kīrtīnām hasitam sudrgbhir lasitaṁ, tava savayaḥ pātu mām aniśsam*
>
> "O dear friend! Your face is the abode of sweetness. Your movements, which defeat the fame of the king of elephants, and Your gentle smiles are desired by all beautiful women. Please protect me always."

Kṛṣṇa Himself, who protects thousands of groups of *gopīs*, the chief of whom are Rādhā and Candrāvalī, sang in the same pattern as they were singing, loudly glorifying each gopī. Sometimes they would sing back and forth in unison. As a reply to the verse above Kṛṣṇa sang:

> *tvad-vadanaṁ sadanaṁ madhumnāṁ, tatra hanta dṛganta-vilāsāḥ*
>
> *teśv asamāṁ suṣamām upajagmuḥ, sunda kāma-kalāḥ sakalās tāḥ*
>
> "O beautiful one! Your face is the abode of all kinds of sweetness, and thereupon the corners of your eyes are sporting. Within those playful glances all the skills of Cupid have come to serve you, who are both contrary and submissive."

The gopīs sang responsively:

> *kānte tvad-āsyodaya-dattam indu, mṛga-cchalād duryasa eva dhatte janopahāsā saha no 'tha vā kiṁ, dvijo 'pi mūḍho garalaṁ jaghāse*
>
> "O beloved! You hold some imperfection in Your moonlike face, like the image of the deer in the moon. But what do we care for the ridicule of people in general? Though Your teeth are twice-born (dvija), they are foolish because they are drinking poison."

When Kṛṣṇa sang the word *sunda*, a gopī would reply singing the word *sundara* instead of *sunda*. When Kṛṣṇa sang the word *kānte* some gopī would sing *kānta*. In this way Kṛṣṇa's girlfriends sang along with Him.

Kṛṣṇa's Vaijayanti garland is made from five different colored flowers, since the word *vaijayantīm* means "five colors."

|| 10.29.45-46 ||

nadyāḥ pulinam āviśya gopībhir hima-vālukam

juṣṭaṁ tat-taralānandi kumudāmoda-vāyunā

bāhu-prasāra-parirambha-karālakoru
nīvī-stanālabhana-narma-nakhāgra-pātaiḥ

kṣvelyāvaloka-hasitair vraja-sundarīṇām

uttambhayan rati-patiṁ ramayāṁ cakāra

TRANSLATION

Śrī Kṛṣṇa went with the gopīs to the bank of the Yamunā, where the sand was cooling and the wind, enlivened by the river's waves, bore the fragrance of lotuses. There Kṛṣṇa threw His arms around the gopīs and embraced them. He aroused Cupid in the beautiful young ladies of Vraja by touching their hands, hair, thighs, belts and breasts, by playfully scratching them with His fingernails, and also by joking with them, glancing at them and laughing with them. In this way the Lord enjoyed His pastimes.

COMMENTARY

"Made joyful by the waves" (*tarala ānanda*) means that the wind afforded bliss by its coolness and gentleness, and by carrying the sweet fragrance of the night-blooming lotuses. Kṛṣṇa derived great pleasure from that wind. The word *reme* is sometimes seen in this verse instead of *juṣṭaṁ*. However, the word *juṣṭaṁ* logically connects this verse to the next wherein the main verb is *ramayāṁ cakāra*. Sometimes there are also alternate readings for the words *taralā-nandi* and *kumudāmoda*.

The *gopīs* had their arms crossed over their breasts in a *svastika* shape. The "throwing of arms" (*bāhu prasāra*) means that Kṛṣṇa opened up the gopīs' arms and made them embrace Him. Besides embracing them, Kṛṣṇa touched their hands, hair, thighs, breasts and belts, and playfully scratched them, with His fingernails. With His glances, smiles and funny words Kṛṣṇa incited His and their amorous desires (*rati-patiṁ*). In this way, Kṛṣṇa enjoyed with each and every gopī.

It may be questioned, how was it possible for Kṛṣṇa to enjoy with millions of young women on the limited bank of the river where there was no privacy or love-beds available? It was definitely possible because the personal form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the land of Vṛndāvana are both unlimitedly powerful. Even a piece of land in Vṛndāvana as small as a sesame seed can expand into a vast area, full of unlimited private pleasure groves, replete with fragrant flower beds, betel nuts, sandalwood paste, perfumes, cool drinking water and flower garlands. Everything was manifested by Kṛṣṇa's Yogamāyā potency acting as the *aghaṭana-ghaṭana-śakti*, the power to make the impossible possible. When the pastimes were finished, Yogamāyā again withdrew everything. In this way everything was perfectly adjusted for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa and His *premi-bhaktas*.

|| 10.29.47 ||

evaṁ bhagavataḥ kṛṣṇāl labdha-mānā mahātmanaḥ

ātmānaṁ menire strīṇāṁ māninyo hy adhikaṁ bhuvi

TRANSLATION

The gopīs became proud of themselves for having received such special attention from Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and each of them thought herself the best woman on earth.

COMMENTARY

The following situation was manifested by Kṛṣṇa's *līlā-śakti* for the purpose of enhancing the sacred rapture in accordance with the logic presented in Bharata Muni's *Nātyaśāstra*:

> *na vinā vipralambhena, sambhogaḥ puṣṭim aśnute,*
>
> *kāsāyite hi vastrādau, bhūyān evābhivardhate*

> "Just as one cannot redden cloth or some other object without the use of red dye, in the same way the happiness of conjugal love (*sambhogaḥ*) cannot reach its fullness (*puṣṭim*) without the experience of separation (*vipralambhena*)."

The pretense for creating this separation is described in this verse. After having obtained the respect of Kṛṣṇa, the original form of the Personality of Godhead, who is the best among all men (*mahā-ātmanaḥ*), and because of being able to enjoy intimately with Him, each gopī became proud (*māninyo*) thinking, "I am the most fortunate woman on the surface of the earth."

|| 10.29.48 ||

tāsāṁ tat-saubhaga-madaṁ vīkṣya mānaṁ ca keśavaḥ

praśamāya prasādāya tatraivāntaradhīyata

TRANSLATION

Lord Keśava, seeing the gopīs too proud of their good fortune, wanted to relieve them of this pride and show them further mercy. Thus He immediately disappeared.

COMMENTARY

Because Kṛṣṇa was enjoying equally with all the *gopīs*, Vṛṣabhānu-nandinī (Rādhā), the leading gopī, manifested a haughty feeling (*māna*) with angry eyes. The lesser ranking *gopīs* became intoxicated (*madam*) with pride over their good fortune. Objecting to this, Kṛṣṇa rectified the situation as described in this verse.

The word *tāsām* (of them) can also be divided into *ta* indicating "them—the women of Vraja" and *sa* "She—Rādhā." Thus the phrase should read: "Seeing the pride (*saubhaga madam*) of the women of Vraja and the anger (*mānam*) of Rādhā." Another reading is *taṁ saubhaga madaṁ* instead of *tat saubhaga madam*.

Kesava disappeared in order to nullify the pride of the *gopīs* and to show special favor to the angry Rādhā. The word *keśava* can be analyzed as *ka*, *isa* and *vayate*. *Ka* means Lord Brahmā, *isa* means Śiva, and *vayate* means to rule or control. For Kesava, who rules both Brahmā and Śiva, what effort is necessary to curb the pride of the *gopīs*? The word *keśava* also suggests *keśan vayate*, one who cleans the hair, or Kesava (Kṛṣṇa) who is expert at dressing Rādhā's hair.

Antaradhīyata (a passive form) is an archaic usage meaning the same as *antardadhat* (disappeared). From later verses, it can be under-stood that Kṛṣṇa forcibly removed

Vṛṣabhānunandinī from the midst of the other *gopīs*. To fulfill Kṛṣṇa's desire Yogamāyā immediately arranged everything in such a way that the other *gopīs* did not even notice Rādhā's departure.

Thus ends the commentary on the Twenty ninth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Thirty

The Gopīs Search for Kṛṣṇa

|| 10.30.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

antarhite bhagavati sahasaiva vrajāṅganāḥ

atapyaṁs tam acakṣāṇāḥ kariṇya iva yūthapam

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: When Lord Kṛṣṇa disappeared so suddenly, the gopīs felt great sorrow at losing sight of Him, like a group of female elephants who have lost their mate.

COMMENTARY

This chapter describes the *gopīs*' madness in separation, their inquiring from the trees about Kṛṣṇa, and their imitation of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. It also tells how Kṛṣṇa enjoyed with Rādhikā and then abandoned Her.

The word *acakṣāṇāḥ* (not seeing) means the same as *apaśyantaḥ*. Not seeing Kṛṣṇa, the *gopīs* became filled with pain like female elephants losing their mate.

|| 10.30.2 ||

gatyānurāga-smita-vibhramekṣitair
mano-ramālāpa-vihāra-vibhramaiḥ

ākṣipta-cittāḥ pramadā ramā-pates

tās tā viceṣṭā jagṛhus tad-ātmikāḥ

TRANSLATION

As the cowherd women remembered Lord Kṛṣṇa, their hearts were overwhelmed by His movements and loving smiles, His playful glances and enchanting talks, and by the many other pastimes He would enjoy with them. Thus absorbed in thoughts of Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of Ramā, the gopīs began acting out His various transcendental pastimes.

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs* began searching for Kṛṣṇa here and there, and not finding Him, their agony of separation increased more and more. The *sañcārī-bhāva* of *unmāda* (divine madness), which appeared due to this pain of separation, is described in two verses in its manifest and unmanifest state.

First, Kṛṣṇa, *ramā-pateḥ* (the master of all beauty and opulence), approaches the *gopīs* with the natural movements of His feet. Coming before the *gopīs*, Kṛṣṇa shows His affectionate gentle smiles and glances, in which the pupils of His eyes dart about in a special way. After attracting the *gopīs*' minds, Kṛṣṇa captivates them with charming conversations such as the following:

Kṛṣṇa: "Oh lotus lady! Are you going to offer your honey to this very thirsty honeybee or not?"

Gopī: "O bee! The husband of the lotuses is the sun, not the bee. How can we allow You to drink our honey?"

Kṛṣṇa: “But My dear lotus, ‘the very nature of you lotuses is that you don’t give your honey to your husband, the sun, but rather to your paramour, the bee.’ Defeated by Kṛṣṇa’s words, the gopī would laugh and then let Kṛṣṇa drink the honey of her lips.”

To another gopī Kṛṣṇa said, “Ah, I can understand that as you approached this *kadamba* tree standing here, you were bitten by an audacious snake. Its venom has already reached your chest, but since you are a respectable maiden you haven’t asked Me to cure you. Still I’ve come, being merciful by nature. Now, while I massage your body, I’ll chant a mantra to counteract the serpent’s poison.”

Gopī: “But, my dear snake charmer, no snake has bitten me. Go massage the body of some girl who actually has suffered a snake bite.”

Kṛṣṇa: “Come now, My dear respectable girl, from your trembling voice I can tell that you are experiencing a feverish reaction to poisoning. Knowing this, if I don’t take care of you I’ll be guilty of killing an innocent woman. So let Me treat you.” Saying this Kṛṣṇa scratched her breasts with His fingernails.

Then Kṛṣṇa and the gopīs would enjoy (*vihara*) pastimes of union (*samprayoga*). After that there would be *vibhrama*, madness due to love. The scriptures say, *citta-vṛtty-anavasthānaṁ sṛṇgārād vibhramo mataḥ*: “Failure of the mind to function on account of conjugal feelings (*sṛṇgāra-rasa*) is called *vibhrama*” As the *gopīs*, in their state of separation, remembered these ecstatic moments with Kṛṣṇa, their minds became overwhelmed (*ākṣipta*).

“Ah, what are you doing here? Go out again and look for the darling of your life!” In this way, the gopīs chastised their own minds, which were on the verge of leaving their bodies.

They acted like this because they were in *pramada*, a state of extreme madness due to the loss of one’s mind. Then rising to the stage of *unmāda* (complete madness), the *gopīs*’ minds became totally absorbed (*tad-ātmika*) in Kṛṣṇa. At this time, the gopīs intelligently imitated the wonderful pastimes (*tās tā viceṣṭā jagṛhus*) of Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.30.3 ||

gati-smita-prekṣaṇa-bhāṣaṇādiṣu

priyāḥ priyasya pratirūḍha-mūrtayaḥ

asāv ahaṁ tv ity abalās tad-ātmikā

nyavediṣuḥ kṛṣṇa-vihāra-vibhramāḥ

TRANSLATION

Because the beloved gopīs were absorbed in thoughts of their beloved Kṛṣṇa, their bodies imitated His way of moving and smiling, His way of beholding them, His speech and His other distinctive features. Deeply immersed in thinking of Him and maddened by remembering His pastimes, they declared to one another, "I am Kṛṣṇa!"

COMMENTARY

The verse describes the mature state of the *gopīs*' condition of *unmāda*. Absorbed in the gait and other characteristics of Kṛṣṇa mentioned in the previous verse, the *gopīs* imitated the Lord. First the actions of Kṛṣṇa entered the senses and mind of *gopīs*' bodies, and then the *gopīs* bodies entered into the various actions and qualities of Kṛṣṇa.

Due to madness the *gopīs* lost all sense of distinction and considered, "I am Kṛṣṇa" and "Kṛṣṇa is me." As the *gopīs* reached the topmost limits of tasting this *rāsa* they became *tad-ātmika* in the sense that their selves assumed a likeness to Kṛṣṇa as they announced to each other "I am Kṛṣṇa" (*asāva aham*). But they did not adopt the mood of *ahaṅgrahopāsanā* (thinking oneself one with the Supreme) as is established by the words *priyāh-priyasya*. None of the *gopīs* were conscious at all that they were women of Vraja. They had attained a unique state of madness, *unmāda* or *vibhramah*, in which they identified completely with Kṛṣṇa in His pastimes.

|| 10.30.4 ||

gāyantya uccair amum eva saṁhatā

vicikyur unmattaka-vad vanād vanam

papracchur ākāśa-vad antaraṁ bahir

bhūteṣu santaṁ puruṣaṁ vanaspatīn

TRANSLATION

Singing loudly of Kṛṣṇa, they searched for Him throughout the Vṛndāvana forest like a band of madwomen. They even asked the trees about Him, who as the Supersoul is present inside and outside of all created things, just like the sky.

COMMENTARY

When that *unmāda* passed its peak and began to subside, the *gopīs* began to search for Kṛṣṇa in a half conscious state. That is described in this verse. Grief stricken because of separation from their beloved, they thought, “we must search for Kṛṣṇa.” Coming together in a group, they wandered from forest to forest singing loudly of Kṛṣṇa. Lost in the madness of love, the *gopīs* even asked the trees about Kṛṣṇa. This is a symptom of their *unmāda* state.

Someone may argue, “We know that Kṛṣṇa was enjoying with Rādhā, the chief gopī, at that time. Therefore, was He even aware of the questions that the gopīs were asking in their state of *unmāda*?” This doubt is clarified by the words describing Kṛṣṇa as pervading inside and outside of all entities (*antaram bahir bhūteṣu*) like the sky (*ākāśa*). In other words, although Kṛṣṇa’s original personal form remains undivided, He is also omnipresent. Therefore, Kṛṣṇa heard the *gopīs*’ questions in those places, though unnoticed by them.

|| 10.30.5 ||

dṛṣṭo vaḥ kaccid aśvattha plakṣa nyagrodha no manaḥ

nanda-sūnur gato hṛtvā prema-hāsāvalokanaiḥ

TRANSLATION

[The gopīs said:] O aśvattha tree, O plakṣa, O nyagrodha, have you seen Kṛṣṇa? That son of Nanda Mahārāja has gone away after stealing our minds with His loving smiles and glances.

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs* pose nine questions about Kṛṣṇa’s whereabouts in verses five through fifteen. “Because the *plakṣa*, *aśvattha* and other trees are so tall, they surely must see Kṛṣṇa even if He is far away,” thinking this, the *gopīs* inquire from the trees in this verse. The *plaksa* tree is the *pīlu* and the *nyagrodha* is the *banyan* tree.

Fearing the trees would say, “Why are you asking?” the *gopīs* said, “Though Kṛṣṇa is the son of the pious Nanda Mahārāja, He has stolen the hearts of us women and run away. He sent His servants as thieves in the form of His sweet smiles and bold glances along with a special bewildering potion of *prema* which maddens everyone. Passing through the gates of our eyes into the city of our hearts, these thieves have stolen the jewel of our minds and run off.”

Standing silently for a short time in expectation of an answer, the *gopīs* thought, “Oh, these trees are useless! They are so proud that they simply ignore us, refusing to give any answer. We have had enough of these trees, who have meager fruits and are ignorant of their religious duty of helping others. Besides, their buds aren’t blossoming and their hearts are impure.” Thinking in this way, the *gopīs* left the trees and went elsewhere.

|| 10.30.6 ||

kaccit kurabakāśoka-nāga-punnāga-campakāḥ

rāmānujo māninīnām ito darpa-hara-smitaḥ

TRANSLATION

O kurabaka tree, O aśoka, O nāga, punnāga and campaka, has Balarāma’s younger brother, whose smile removes the audacity of all proud women, passed this way?

COMMENTARY

Entering a flower garden, the *gopīs* thought, “Ah, yes, it is better to ask from these trees which have pure hearts, and are graciously honoring their guests (the bees) by serving them their honey.” Thus the *gopīs* approached the *kurubaka* and other trees. The *kurubaka* (amaranth) has red, unfading flowers. *Nāga* means *nāgakeśara*.

Meeting the trees, the *gopīs* asked, “Where has Kṛṣṇa gone?” or “Where is He hiding?” Fearing the trees would ask, “Why do you want to know?” the *gopīs* said, “Using His smile Kṛṣṇa has stolen the false pride of us women, whose wealth is our pride, and has run away depriving us of all our wealth.”

When the wind shook the tips of the branches, the *gopīs* thought, “Oh, they are shaking their heads, saying they do not know. What use do we have for these hard-hearted males?” Thinking thus, they went elsewhere.

|| 10.30.7 ||

kaccit tulasi kalyāṇi govinda-caraṇa-priye

saha tvāli-kulair bibhrad dṛṣṭas te ’ti-priyo ’cyutaḥ

TRANSLATION

O most kind tulasī, to whom the feet of Govinda are so dear, have you seen that infallible one walk by, wearing you and encircled by swarms of bees?

COMMENTARY

Approaching the *tulasī, mālatī* and other plants, the *gopīs* thought, "These plants, being female, will understand the agony of a woman's heart and surely be merciful, so let us inquire from them." Thinking like this, they approached the chief plant, *tulasī* and asked, "You are fortunate, being dear to the feet of Govinda (*govinda-carana-priye*), but we are unfortunate because Kṛṣṇa has left us." The phrase *govinda-carana-priye* can also mean "dear to the respectable Govinda" because the word *caraṇa* indicates respect, as in the expression *ācārya-caraṇāḥ*, the respectable teacher.

"You *gopīs* are also dear to Govinda's feet." Expecting such an answer, the *gopīs* said, "True, but you are more fortunate than us because of the additional attractive quality of never experiencing separation. Carrying you around His neck, Kṛṣṇa has gone off. This proves the magnitude of your great fortune. 'Encircled by swarms of bees' implies that Kṛṣṇa carries you even though that means having to ignore the disturbance created by many thousands of bees. Thus we must conclude that He, who is fond of fine fragrances, has not accepted us because we do not have any such fine fragrance."

|| 10.30.8 ||

mālaty adarśi vaḥ kaccin mallike jāti-yūthike

prītiṁ vo janayan yātaḥ kara-sparśena mādhavaḥ

TRANSLATION

O mālati, O mallikā, O jāti and yūthikā, has Mādhava gone by here, giving you pleasure with the touch of His hand?

COMMENTARY

"Ah, this *tulasī* is intoxicated by pride in her good fortune, so she will not even look at us. Therefore let us ask from these fragrant jasmine (*mālatī*) flowers, the co-wives of *tulasī*, who, like us, do not have such good fortune."

Saying this, the *gopīs* went off in another direction and spoke this verse. "Because Kṛṣṇa has touched you while picking your flowers, you are now blooming fully in the rainy and

autumn seasons." *Jāti* and *mālatī* are both species of jasmine flowers, but one blossoms most fully in the rainy season and the other in the fall.

|| 10.30.9 ||

cūta-priyāla-panasāsana-kovidāra

jambv-arka-bilva-bakulāmra-kadamba-nīpāḥ

ye 'nye parārtha-bhavakā yamunopakūlāḥ

śaṁsantu kṛṣṇa-padavīṁ rahitātmanāṁ naḥ

TRANSLATION

O cūta, O priyāla, O panasa, āsana and kovidāra, O jambu, O arka, O bilva, bakula and āmra, O kadamba and nīpa and all you other plants and trees living by the banks of the Yamunā who have dedicated your very existence to the welfare of others, we gopīs have lost our minds, so please tell us where Kṛṣṇa has gone.

COMMENTARY

"Just see these jasmines are afraid of Kṛṣṇa and their co-wife *tulasī*, so even though they know they do not speak. What use do we have with them, since they are dependent on others?" Saying this, the *gopīs* went elsewhere.

"Just see these mango and *piyāla* trees standing motionless on the bank of the Yamunā. We can deduce that they must be meditating on Viṣṇu, so they will surely not lie to us." With this faith, the *gopīs* inquired from the trees.

"O *cūta* (a mango creeper), O *āmra* (a mango tree), O *nipa* (dust *kadamba* with large flowers), O *kadamba* (smaller flowers with sweet fragrance), O *piyāla* (type of *śāla* tree), O *āsana* (a yellow *śāla* tree), O *kovidara* (mountain ebony tree), O coconut, betelnut tree and *arka*, we *gopīs* have lost our minds, so please tell us where Kṛṣṇa has gone." Even though the *arka* plant is very insignificant, it always grows near Gopīśvara Mahādeva [a major Śiva deity in Vṛndāvana] because it is dear to him.

The trees reply, "Why should we tell you?"

Gopīs: "Because you are living on the bank of the Yamunā just to benefit others (*para-artha*)."

|| 10.30.10 ||

kiṁ te kṛtaṁ kṣiti tapo bata keśavāṅghri-

sparśotsavotpulakitāṅga-nahair vibhāsi

apy aṅghri-sambhava urukrama-vikramād vā

āho varāha-vapuṣaḥ parirambhaṇena

TRANSLATION

O mother earth, what austerity did you perform to attain the touch of Lord Keśava's lotus feet, which has brought you such great joy that your bodily hairs are standing on end? You appear very beautiful in this condition. Was it during the Lord's current appearance that you acquired this ecstatic symptom, or was it perhaps much earlier, when He stepped upon you in His form of the dwarf Vāmanadeva, or even earlier, when He embraced you in His form of the boar Varāhadeva?

COMMENTARY

One *gopī* said, "Perhaps these trees and plants did not hear our question because they were in trance, meditating on Lord Viṣṇu. Or perhaps, since they will not tell us where Kṛṣṇa has gone, they are hardhearted even though they live in a holy place. Anyway, what is the use of unnecessarily criticizing the residents of a holy place? We cannot ascertain whether they know the whereabouts of Kṛṣṇa or not. Therefore, we should ask that person who has actually seen Kṛṣṇa and can tell us the truth."

The other *gopīs* asked, "O sakhī! Do you know that person?" Addressed thus, the first gopī replied by pointing her forefinger at the earth.

The other *gopīs* said, "Yes, what you say is true. Wherever Kṛṣṇa is, He is somewhere on the earth. Since Kṛṣṇa always walks on the earth, she is never separated from Him and thus cannot understand how much His parents, girlfriends and servants suffer in His absence. Therefore we cannot simply direct the same sort of inquiry at her as we made to others previously. Rather we should ask her what austerities she did long ago to get this good fortune. If we know that, then we also can do the same austerities and become freed from our extreme state of suffering in separation from Kṛṣṇa."

Considering in this way, they then asked, “O earth, what austerities did you perform by which you shine with bliss born from the touch of Kesava’s feet? Because your “bodily hairs” in the form of grass and sprouts are standing on end, we understand that Kṛṣṇa has touched you with His feet. Wherever Kṛṣṇa may be, He stands there touching you with His feet. Thus you have the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa’s physical contact day and night. Please tell us what austerities you performed that brought about this condition. Hearing that, our lives will become successful.”

Seeing the earth failing to reply, the *gopīs* remembered her past and presented their conjectures. “Your power was shown when you bore the great burden of Vāmana’s foot as he stretched his other foot from Pātala to Svarga. By what austerity did you get that strength?” The word *vā* stands for *vai* “certainly” or else it completes the rhythm of the verse.

“Or what austerity did you do to get the firm embrace of Vāraha? That austerity by which you get happiness rarely achieved by others is also joyfully performed because it brings you, a woman, into contact with a man. Thus there is no woman more fortunate than you.”

|| 10.30.11 ||

apy eṇa-patny upagataḥ priyayeha gātrais

tanvan dṛśāṁ sakhī su-nirvṛtim acyuto vaḥ

kāntāṅga-saṅga-kuca-kuṅkuma-rañjitāyāḥ

kunda-srajaḥ kula-pater iha vāti gandhaḥ

TRANSLATION

O friend, wife of the deer, has Lord Acyuta been here with His beloved, bringing great joy to your eyes? Indeed, blowing this way is the fragrance of His garland of kunda flowers, which was smeared with the kuṅkuma from the breasts of His girlfriend when He embraced Her.

COMMENTARY

Not hearing any answer the *gopīs* said, “Ah, alas! How will she (earth); who is relishing the pleasure of having her body marked by her consort (Kṛṣṇa’s footprints with the

symbols of a flag, thunderbolt and elephant goad), who has brought her husband under her own control, and who is blinded by the intoxication of pride, reply to us?"

Moving forward, the *gopīs* saw a doe and spoke to her. "O friend, O wife of the deer! Has Kṛṣṇa come into your vicinity? Though you are the wife of a deer, like us, you are dear to Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa is dear to you. From the bliss in your clear eyes we can tell that Śrī Kṛṣṇa has expanded your joy (*nirvṛtim* means *ānandam*) with the beauty of His face, hands, limbs and smile. Having attained such bliss of the eyes, you follow Him everywhere and therefore Kṛṣṇa never falls (*acyuta*) from your vision."

The word *dṛsām* "sight" is plural to show respect. The name Acyuta implies, "Because of your [deer] greed to gain ecstasy for your own eyes you are following Kṛṣṇa, and for that reason He is never lost (*vicyuta*) to you."

Seeing the doe continue to walk in her natural way, the *gopīs* exclaimed, "Oh, are you telling us that you have seen Kṛṣṇa? Look! As this deer walks she constantly turns her head back to us; as if to say, 'I will show Him to you; just follow me and I will show you Kṛṣṇa.' In this merciless Vṛndāvana, she is the only merciful person."

As the *gopīs* follow the doe they happen to lose sight of her, and they cry out, "Oh, why can't we see the deer who is showing us the way to Kṛṣṇa?"

In answer to this question one gopī says, "Kṛṣṇa must be somewhere in the vicinity and that the deer, being afraid of Kṛṣṇa, must have hidden herself to avoid the possible mistake of revealing His presence."

Reasoning in this way, the *gopīs* detect a fragrance that has by chance blown their way, and they repeatedly declare with great glee, "Yes! Yes! This is it! By embracing His girlfriend, Kṛṣṇa's jasmine garland was smeared with the *kuṅkuma* powder on her breasts, and the fragrances of all these things are reaching us." Thus the *gopīs* smelled the aroma of the two lovers' bodies, of Kṛṣṇa's jasmine garland, and of the *kunkuma* powder on His lover's breasts.

The *gopīs* continue, "Giving up His position as the Lord of thousands of *gopīs* (*kula-pater*), Kṛṣṇa is now enjoying with a single girlfriend. Just see His injustice!"

|| 10.30.12 ||

bāhuṁ priyāṁsa upadhāya gṛhīta-padmo

rāmānujas tulasikāli-kulair madāndhaiḥ

anvīyamāna iha vas taravaḥ praṇāmaṁ

kiṁ vābhinandati caran praṇayāvalokaiḥ

TRANSLATION

O trees, we see that you are bowing down. When the younger brother of Rāma walked by here, followed by intoxicated bees swarming around the tulasī mañjarīs decorating His garland, did He acknowledge your obeisances with His affectionate glances? He must have been resting His arm on the shoulder of His beloved and carrying a lotus flower in His free hand.

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs*, discussing further clues that Kṛṣṇa was right there, saw that the trees, bent over with abundant fruits and flowers, were offering obeisances to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

The *gopīs* said, “O trees! When Kṛṣṇa passed by here did He acknowledge or not with His loving glances the obeisances of you, his subjects, who were offering your fruits and other gifts into His hands? Alas, alas! Why is that only saintly persons like you, who are in the mode of goodness, get the opportunity to have Kṛṣṇa’s affectionate glances?”

Speaking with jealousy, the *gopīs* continued, “This younger brother of Balarāma, who is well known for His intoxicated love affairs, must be similarly intoxicated, so He is resting His left arm on the pillow of His beloved’s soft shoulder due to the fatigue of loving exchanges. Kṛṣṇa must be carrying a blue lotus in His right hand to drive away the bees eagerly trying to attack His beloved’s face after smelling its sweet aroma. Therefore, being exclusively absorbed in serving His beloved, how could Kṛṣṇa glance upon you trees?”

“The maddened bees have left the tender *tulasī* groves to follow the two lovers. Therefore Kṛṣṇa must be hiding here somewhere enjoying His pastimes. Let’s follow these swarms of bees.”

Other *gopīs* reply, “It is not proper for respectable persons to follow after those who are blinded by intoxication.”

|| 10.30.13 ||

pṛcchatemā latā bāhūn apy āśliṣṭā vanaspateḥ

nūnaṁ tat-karaja-spṛṣṭā bibhraty utpulakāny aho

TRANSLATION

Let us ask these creepers about Kṛṣṇa. Even though they are embracing the arms of their husband, this tree, they certainly must have been touched by Kṛṣṇa's fingernails, since out of joy they are manifesting eruptions on their skin.

COMMENTARY

Other *gopīs*, pointing out another sign of Kṛṣṇa's presence said, "O friends, ask these creepers who bear signs of having the association of Kṛṣṇa. You should not say that because they are still embracing the trees, these creepers did not meet Kṛṣṇa. Even though they are fully embracing the arms of their husband, the tree, just see the excess of their lust! They must have been touched by the nails of Kṛṣṇa, and out of jubilation their hairs are standing on end. This would not occur just from contacting their husbands. Therefore, because we see this symptom, they cannot tell us a lie like all the others saying, 'We did not see Kṛṣṇa."

|| 10.30.14 ||

ity unmatta-vaco gopyaḥ kṛṣṇānveṣaṇa-kātarāḥ

līlā bhagavatas tās tā hy anucakrus tad-ātmikāḥ

TRANSLATION

Having spoken these words, the gopīs, distraught from searching for Kṛṣṇa, began to act out His various pastimes, fully absorbed in thoughts of Him.

COMMENTARY

"Stunned in ecstasy, these trees cannot speak," the *gopīs* concluded.

Asking such questions to inanimate objects and ascribing material desires and so forth to them shows the internal love of the *gopīs* had developed to the stage of *unmāda*, madness. While in the midst of searching for Kṛṣṇa, each of the *gopīs* thought "I should

take the opportunity to make myself appear like Kṛṣṇa and act out His pastimes so as to give some momentary pleasure to myself and these distraught *gopīs* too."

As the *gopīs* remembered each one of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, their minds became absorbed in Kṛṣṇa (*tad-ātmika*), and they began to enact those pastimes beginning with the killing of Pūtanā. In this context, it should be understood that Yogamāyā took the form of another gopī within their company to act in those pastimes which were inconsistent with the *gopīs*' mood. While the *gopīs* themselves acted out those pastimes which were favorable to their loving mood.

|| 10.30.15 ||

kasyācit pūtanāyantyāḥ kṛṣṇāyanty apibat stanam

tokayitvā rudaty anyā padāhan śakaṭāyatīm

TRANSLATION

One gopī imitated Pūtanā, while another acted like infant Kṛṣṇa and pretended to suck her breast. Another gopī, crying in imitation of infant Kṛṣṇa, kicked a gopī who was taking the role of the cart demon, Śakaṭāsura.

COMMENTARY

The imitation of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes is described in four verses. One gopī acted as Pūtanā and another as Kṛṣṇa, pretending to drink milk from her breast. One gopī cried like a baby and kicked another gopī imitating the cart.

|| 10.30.16 ||

daityāyitvā jahārānyām eko kṛṣṇārbha-bhāvanām

riṅgayām āsa kāpy aṅghrī karṣantī ghoṣa-niḥsvanaiḥ

TRANSLATION

One gopī took the role of Tṛṇāvarta and carried away another, who was acting like infant Kṛṣṇa, while yet another gopī crawled about, her ankle bells tinkling as she pulled her feet.

COMMENTARY

One gopī imitated the demon Tṛṇāvarta (*daityāyitvā eka*) who stole another gopī acting like infant Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇārbha bhāvanām*).

|| 10.30.17 ||

kṛṣṇa-rāmāyite dve tu gopāyantyaś ca kāścana

vatsāyatīṁ hanti cānyā tatraikā tu bakāyatīm

TRANSLATION

Two gopīs acted like Rāma and Kṛṣṇa in the midst of several others, who took the role of cowherd boys. One gopī enacted Kṛṣṇa's killing of the demon Vatsāsura, represented by another gopī, and a pair of gopīs acted out the killing of Bakāsura.

|| 10.30.18 ||

āhūya dūra-gā yadvat kṛṣṇas tam anuvartatīm

veṇuṁ kvaṇantīṁ krīḍantīm anyāḥ śaṁsanti sādhv iti

TRANSLATION

When one gopī perfectly imitated how Kṛṣṇa would call the cows who had wandered far away, how He would play His flute and how He would engage in various sports, the others congratulated her with exclamations of "Well done! Well done!"

COMMENTARY

One gopī acted like Kṛṣṇa, playing the flute to call the cows, who had wandered far off, and made them follow Him.

|| 10.30.19 ||

kasyāñcit sva-bhujaṁ nyasya calanty āhāparā nanu

kṛṣṇo 'haṁ paśyata gatiṁ lalitām iti tan-manāḥ

TRANSLATION

Another gopī, her mind fixed on Kṛṣṇa, walked about with her arm resting on the shoulder of a friend and declared, "I am Kṛṣṇa! Just see how gracefully I move!"

COMMENTARY

In four verses (19-22) Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī describes how the *gopīs*, who were totally absorbed in meditating upon and acting out Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, came under the sway of the *saṇcāri-bhāva* known as *unmāda*. Thus they lost their own self-awareness and totally identified themselves with Kṛṣṇa, exclaiming, "I am Kṛṣṇa and walk around with My arm resting on the shoulders of Subala. Just see My graceful actions!"

|| 10.30.20 ||

mā bhaiṣṭa vāta-varṣābhyāṁ tat-trāṇaṁ vihitaṁ maya

ity uktvaikena hastena yatanty unnidadhe 'mbaram

TRANSLATION

"Don't be afraid of the wind and rain," said one gopī. "I will save you." And with that she lifted her shawl above her head.

COMMENTARY

In order to graphically depict the Govardhana pastime, one gopī took her upper cloth and carefully raised it above her head to imitate Kṛṣṇa's lifting Govardhana Hill.

|| 10.30.21 ||

āruhyaikā padākramya śirasy āhāparāṁ nṛpa

duṣṭāhe gaccha jāto 'haṁ khalānām nanu daṇḍa-kṛt

TRANSLATION

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] O King, one gopī climbed on another's shoulders and, putting her foot on the other's head, said, "Go away from here, O wicked snake! You should know that I have taken birth in this world just to punish the envious."

COMMENTARY

Duṣṭa-ahe (wicked snake) indicates the serpent Kāliya.

|| 10.30.22 ||

tatraikovāca he gopā dāvāgniṁ paśyatolbaṇam

cakṣūṁṣy āśv apidadhvaṁ vo vidhāsye kṣemam añjasā

TRANSLATION

Then another gopī spoke up: My dear cowherd boys, look at this raging forest fire! Quickly close your eyes and I will easily protect you.

|| 10.30.23 ||

baddhānyayā srajā kācit tanvī tatra ulūkhale

badhnāmi bhāṇḍa-bhettāraṁ haiyaṅgava-muṣaṁ tv iti

bhītā su-dṛk pidhāyāsyaṁ bheje bhīti-viḍambanam

TRANSLATION

One gopī tied up her slender companion with a flower garland and said, "Now I will bind this boy who has broken the butter pots and stolen the butter." The second gopī then covered her face and beautiful eyes, pretending to be afraid.

COMMENTARY

As the predominance of *unmāda* became suddenly subdued, the *gopīs*' self-identification with Kṛṣṇa slackened and they resumed their identities as *gopīs*. When one gopī showed enthusiasm in imitating Kṛṣṇa's stealing butter and breaking the yogurt pots, Yogamāyā played the role of Yaśodā and performed the required actions saying, "O naughty child, You have stolen butter and run away. I will tie You up." Then Yogamāyā tied up that gopī with a garland. Out of fear, the gopī hid her face with her two hands. This is described in this verse.

|| 10.30.24 ||

evaṁ kṛṣṇaṁ pṛcchamānā vṛṇdāvana-latās tarūn

vyacakṣata vanoddeśe padāni paramātmanaḥ

TRANSLATION

While the gopīs were thus imitating Kṛṣṇa's pastimes and asking Vṛndāvana's creepers and trees where Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Soul, might be, they happened to see His footprints in a corner of the forest.

COMMENTARY

In this way (*evam*) the *gopīs* searched for Kṛṣṇa in forest after forest, asking His whereabouts from the trees. The *sañcārī-bhāva* called *unmāda* which appears in the state of separation is characterized by identity with the object of affection when it is in its most intense state of self forgetfulness. This has been described in three verses beginning with (*priyāḥ priyasya pratirūḍha-mūrtayaḥ* (10.30.3) and *kṛṣṇa 'haṁ paśyata gatiṁ* (10.30.19)).

In the medium stage of *unmāda* there is imitation of the beloved's behavior with some self awareness, as in the following statement in the story of Prahlāda: "*kvacit tad-bhāvanā-yuktas, tanmayo 'nucakāra ha*, Sometimes being fully absorbed in thoughts of Kṛṣṇa, Prahlāda Mahārāja felt oneness and imitated the pastimes of the Lord." (SB 7.4.40) In this chapter we have a similar statement: "One gopī imitated Pūtanā, while another acted like infant Kṛṣṇa and pretended to suck her breast. Another gopī, crying in imitation of infant Kṛṣṇa, kicked a gopī who was taking the role of the cart demon, Śakaṭāsura." (SB 10.30.15)

In the weakest stage of *unmāda*, the *gopīs* regain their self-awareness and inquire from the creepers and other unconscious living beings.

|| 10.30.25 ||

padāni vyaktam etāni nanda-sūnor mahātmanaḥ

lakṣyante hi dhvajāmbhoja-vajrāṅkuśa-yavādibhiḥ

TRANSLATION

[The gopīs said:] The marks of a flag, lotus, thunderbolt, elephant goad, barleycorn and so forth on these footprints clearly distinguish them as belonging to that great soul, the son of Nanda Mahārāja.

COMMENTARY

Having thus described their three-fold madness (*unmāda*), the gopīs unexpectedly find the footprints of Kṛṣṇa and joyfully speak this verse.

In the following verses, the *Skanda Purāṇa* states the particular places on His feet where Kṛṣṇa carries the mark of the flag and also other marks, and the reasons for these marks: “At the base of the large toe on Kṛṣṇa’s right foot, the unborn Lord carries the mark of a disc, which cuts down the six mental enemies (lust, anger, greed, envy, illusion, intoxication) of His devotees.”

“At the bottom of the middle toe of that same foot Lord Acyuta has a lotus flower, which increases the greed for Kṛṣṇa in the minds of the beelike devotees who meditate on His feet.”

“At the base of Kṛṣṇa’s small toe is a thunderbolt, which smashes the mountains of His devotees’ reactions to past sins. In the middle of Kṛṣṇa’s heel is the mark of an elephant goad, which brings the elephants of His devotees’ minds under control. The joint of Kṛṣṇa’s right large toe bears the mark of a barleycorn, representing all kinds of enjoyable opulences. A thunderbolt is found on the right side of Kṛṣṇa’s right foot, and an elephant goad below that.”

The *ācāryas* of the Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* explain that since the particular feet under discussion are Lord Kṛṣṇa’s, we should know that the thunderbolt is at the base of His small toe and the elephant goad below the thunderbolt. An elephant goad on the heel belongs rather to Lord Nārāyaṇa and other *Viṣṇu-tattva* expansions.

Thus the *Skanda Purāṇa* describes six marks on Kṛṣṇa’s right foot—the disc, flag, lotus, thunderbolt, elephant goad and barleycorn. The *Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī* mentions even more marks: a vertical line beginning at the middle of Kṛṣṇa’s foot and continuing as far as the juncture between His big toe and second toe; an umbrella below the disc; at the base of the middle of Kṛṣṇa’s foot, a group of four *svastikas* in the four cardinal directions; at the four points where each *svastika* meets the next, four rose apples; and in the middle of the *svastikas*, an octagon. This makes eleven marks on Kṛṣṇa’s right foot.

The marks on Kṛṣṇa's left foot are as follows: At the base of the large toe is a conchshell with its mouth facing the toe. At the base of the middle toe are two concentric circles, representing the inner and outer sky. Below this mark is Cupid's unstrung bow, at the base of the bow is a triangle, and surrounding the triangle is a group of four water pots. At the base of the triangle is a half-moon with two more triangles touching its points, and below the half-moon is a fish. All together, then, there are nineteen distinguishing marks on the soles of Lord Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet.

|| 10.30.26 ||

tais taiḥ padais tat-padavīm anvicchantyo 'grato 'balāḥ

vadhvāḥ padaiḥ su-pṛktāni vilokyārtāḥ samabruvan

TRANSLATION

The gopīs began following Kṛṣṇa's path, as shown by His many footprints, but when they saw that these prints were thoroughly intermixed with those of His dearmost consort, they became perturbed and spoke as follows.

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs* then saw the footprints of Kṛṣṇa mixed (*supṛktāni*) with those of Rādhā.

|| 10.30.27 ||

kasyāḥ padāni caitāni yātāyā nanda-sūnunā

aṁsa-nyasta-prakoṣṭhāyāḥ kareṇoḥ kariṇā yathā

TRANSLATION

[The gopīs said:] Here we see the footprints of some gopī who must have been walking along with the son of Nanda Mahārāja. He must have put His arm on Her shoulder, just as an elephant rests His trunk on the shoulder of an accompanying she-elephant.

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs* said, "These are the footprints of some gopī upon whose shoulders Kṛṣṇa has placed His left arm."

|| 10.30.28 ||

anayārādhito nūnaṁ bhagavān harir īśvaraḥ

yan no vihāya govindaḥ prīto yām anayad rahaḥ

TRANSLATION

Certainly this particular gopī has perfectly worshiped the all-powerful Personality of Godhead, Govinda, since He was so pleased with Her that He abandoned the rest of us and brought Her to a secluded place.

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs* in the *suhṛd-pakṣa* (friendly group) such as Lalitā recognized the footprints of Rādhā and were internally enlivened, but since they were amongst many different kinds of *gopīs*, they pretended externally not to recognize those footprints. Without mentioning Rādhā's name, they joyfully declared Her good fortune in this verse.

The *gopīs* said, "Certainly Lord Nārāyaṇa (*bhagavān*), who takes away (*hari*) the sorrow of the devotees, and who is capable (*īśvara*) of fulfilling their desires, has been worshiped by (*ārādhitaḥ*) this (*anaya*) fortunate woman. But He has not been worshiped by us, so after rejecting us, He has run away alone with Her." In this statement the word *ārādhitaḥ* refers to Srīmatī Rādhārānī. The sage Śukadeva Gosvāmī has tried with all endeavor to keep Rādhā's name hidden, but now it is automatically shining forth from the moon of Śukadeva Gosvāmī's mouth. This is indeed Rādhā's mercy, and it is like the rumbling of a kettledrum sounded to announce Her great fortune.

The *Purāṇas* say the name Rādhikā means one who satisfies the desires of Kṛṣṇa by Her worship. Throughout the *Vedas*, Śrīmati Rādhārānī's name is directly mentioned. The *Puruṣa-bodhinī Upaniṣad* of the *Atharva Veda* says, "In the supreme abode of Gokula in the district of Mathurā, Srīmatī Rādhārānī and Srīmatī Candrāvalī-devī stand at the left and right side of Lord Kṛṣṇa." The *Gautamīya Tantra* says: *devī kṛṣṇamayī proktā rādhikā para-devatā*, Śrīmati Rādhikā, who shines brilliantly, is different from Lord Kṛṣṇa and She is the most worshipable. The *Kṛṣṇopaniṣad* says: *vamanga sahita devī rādhā vṛndāvanesvarī*, "Beautiful Rādhā, the queen of Vṛndāvana, is always on the left side of Kṛṣṇa."

Another meaning of this verse is as follows. "O unfortunate *gopīs* (*anaya*), uselessly you are thinking yourselves equal to that fortunate woman, and are wandering around thinking yourselves mistreated. It is a fact (*nūnaṁ*) that Hari has obtained Rādhā at this

secret place (*rahaḥ*). This handsome person, who is full of lust and proclaiming His own glories (*bhagavān*), and who is capable of cheating (*īśvara*), has abandoned (*vihāya*) us beautiful girls and taken Her senses in order to enjoy them. Or that He is skillfully giving pleasure (*vindayati*) to all the senses (*gah*) of that gopī, therefore He is Govinda. With a satisfied heart (*prītaḥ*) He has taken Her off alone."

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī describes the beautiful footprints of Śrīmati Rādhikā in his *Śrī Ujjvala-nīlamani*: "At the base of the large toe of Rādhā's left foot is the mark of a barleycorn, below that mark is a disc, below the disc is an umbrella, and below the umbrella is a bracelet. A vertical line extends from the middle of Rādhā's foot to the juncture of Rādhā's large and second toes. At the base of the middle toe is a lotus, below that is a flag with a banner, and below the flag is a creeper, together with a flower. At the base of Rādhā's small toe is an elephant goad, and upon Her heel is a half-moon. Thus there are eleven marks on Rādhā's left foot."

"At the base of the large toe of Rādhā's right foot is a conchshell, and below that a spear. At the base of the small toe of Rādhā's right foot is a sacrificial altar, below that an earring, and below the earring a spear. Along the base of the second, third, fourth and small toe is the mark of a mountain, below which is a chariot, and on the heel is a fish."

"Thus all together there are nineteen distinguishing marks on the soles of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's lotus feet."

|| 10.30.29 ||

dhanyā aho amī ālyo govindāṅghry-abja-reṇavaḥ

yān brahmeśau ramā devī dadhur mūrdhny agha-nuttaye

TRANSLATION

O girls! The dust of Govinda's lotus feet is so sacred that even Brahmā, Śiva and the goddess Ramā take that dust upon their heads to dispel sinful reactions.

COMMENTARY

The neutral *gopīs*, who were unaware of what Rādhā's sakhīs perceived, saw the footprints of Kṛṣṇa and then spoke. "Blessed is the dust of Kṛṣṇa's feet, for Brahmā and

Śiva hold that dust on their heads in order to remove the sorrow they feel in separation from the Lord. Every evening at about five o'clock, Kṛṣṇa returns from the cow pastures with His cowherd boyfriends. At that time great demigods like Brahmā and Śiva come down from heaven to take the dust of Kṛṣṇa's feet on their heads. This is mentioned in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.35.22): "The various Upadevas, standing on all sides of Kṛṣṇa like panegyrists, offer their music, singing and gifts of tribute." The *gopīs* thought, "Although it is seen that the demigods offer obeisances to Kṛṣṇa's foot dust, we cannot because of the restraints of modesty. Consequently we are sinking further into sin."

|| 10.30.30 ||

tasyā amūni naḥ kṣobhaṁ kurvanty uccaiḥ padāni yat

yaikāpahṛtya gopīnām raho bhunkte 'cyutādharam

na lakṣyante padāny atra tasyā nūnaṁ tṛṇāṅkuraiḥ

khidyat-sujātāṅghri-talām unninye preyasīṁ priyaḥ

TRANSLATION

These footprints of that special gopī greatly disturb us. Of all the gopīs, She alone was taken away to a secluded place, where She is enjoying the lips of Kṛṣṇa. Look, we can't see Her footprints over here! It's obvious that the grass and sprouts were hurting the tender soles of Her feet, and so the lover lifted up His beloved.

COMMENTARY

This verse is spoken by the *gopīs* who are rivals (*prati-pakṣa*) of Śrīmati Rādhikā.

"The footprints of this gopī give us great sorrow. She has stolen the lips of Acyuta which should be tasted by all of us *gopīs*, and is alone enjoying them. By some unknown pious acts that lusty woman brought Kṛṣṇa under Her control, so that Kṛṣṇa abandoned us, who have actual love for Him, and has taken Her far away.

"O *gopīs* afflicted with the great sickness of envy, do not lament. Here we do not see Rādhā's footprints." With this intention Rādhā's intimate sakhīs like Lalitā speak. The rival *gopīs*, however, reply negatively, gleefully looking at the other *gopīs* and quietly speaking to them with ironic conjecture in the words beginning *nūnam*.

“Embracing Her with His two arms, Kṛṣṇa has lifted (*unninye*) Her to His chest, because being most dear (*preyasīṁ*) to Him, He could not bear the pain to Her tender feet.” By this Rādhā gave Her own group of intimate sakhīs two types of bliss: the happiness arising from seeing Her good fortune, and happiness arising from seeing the sorrow of Her rivals (*vipakṣa-sakhīs*).

|| 10.30.31 ||

imāny adhika-magnāni padāni vahato vadhūm

gopyaḥ paśyata kṛṣṇasya bhārākrāntasya kāminaḥ

atrāvaropitā kāntā puṣpa-hetor mahātmanā

TRANSLATION

Please observe, my dear gopīs, how in this place lusty Kṛṣṇa’s footprints are pressed more deeply into the ground. Carrying the weight of His beloved must have been difficult for Him. And over here that intelligent boy must have put Her down to gather some flowers.

COMMENTARY

“O unobservant *gopīs*! Do not grieve. Why are you saying all of this? You are speaking without thinking. Actually the disappearance of Her footprints is even more distressful for us than their appearance, because it brings to mind the disappearance of our own life airs.” With this implication in mind, the *vipakṣa-sakhīs* (rival *gopīs*) such as Candravālī speak the words beginning *imāni*.

“Here Kṛṣṇa’s footprints are more prominently visible in the earth. Though not married to Her, Kṛṣṇa is treating Her as if She were His bride, and is wandering about with an extra burden like a householder with his family. Because Kṛṣṇa has rejected us, who are filled with genuine love, we can understand that He is just filled with lust, not sincere love. Thus, He has carried away this lusty woman. Otherwise how could the heir prince of Vraja, being very tender in strength Himself, become the carrier of some cowherd girl?”

Again the dear friends (*sva-pakṣa sakhīs*) of Śrīmati Rādhikā speak with the words beginning *atrāvaropitā*. The word *mahātmanā* (great soul) means by the crown-jewel of valiant lovers. Or else, by Him whose heart (*ātmā*) was absorbed in the festivity of decorating Her (*mahe* means *tat-prasādhanotsave*). “He put Her down to gather flowers” means that Kṛṣṇa was thinking, “As soon as this *asoka* tree was touched by Rādhikā’s foot, it burst into bloom. Now I would like to decorate Rādhā with these flowers.” Therefore Kṛṣṇa is called very intelligent (*mahātmanā*).

|| 10.30.32 ||

atra prasūnāvacayaḥ priyārthe preyasā kṛtaḥ

prapadākramaṇa ete paśyatāsakale pade

TRANSLATION

Just see how in this place dear Kṛṣṇa collected flowers for His beloved. Here He has left the impression of only the front part of His feet because He was standing on His toes to reach the flowers.

COMMENTARY

“Here Kṛṣṇa has picked flowers from the branch of the *asoka* tree for His beloved. To pluck the flowers on the branches beyond His reach, Kṛṣṇa raised Himself on His toes. Thus only part of His feet, not all (*asakale*) is visible in the foot prints.” Flowers don’t appear on the lower branches of this tree.

|| 10.30.33 ||

keśa-prasādhanaṁ tv atra kāminyāḥ kāminā kṛtam

tāni cūḍayatā kāntām upaviṣṭam iha dhruvam

TRANSLATION

Certainly Kṛṣṇa sat down here with His girlfriend to arrange Her hair. The lusty boy must have made a crown for that lusty girl out of the flowers He had collected.

COMMENTARY

Seeing the signs that She had sat down between Kṛṣṇa’s knees, the rival *gopīs* again speak. “Here Kṛṣṇa sat down and dressed that girl’s hair, using a comb supplied by the *vanadevīs*, forest goddesses. This girl is filled with lust not love, because She has cheated Her own friends, and gone off alone with Her lover. Kṛṣṇa too is filled with lust, because He has neglected us gopīs, who are filled with pure love for Him and tormented by the pain of separation. While sitting here He made a crown of flowers for His lusty

girlfriend, or else He jokingly combed Her hair into a topknot (*cūḍayatā*) to resemble a man. Thus, they engaged in playful conversation in this secluded place."

|| 10.30.34 ||

reme tayā cātma-rata ātmārāmo 'py akhaṇḍitaḥ

kāminām darśayan dainyam strīṇām caiva durātmatām

TRANSLATION

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Lord Kṛṣṇa enjoyed with that gopī, although He enjoys only within, being self-satisfied and complete in Himself. Thus by contrast He showed the wretchedness of ordinary lusty men and hardhearted women.

COMMENTARY

After showing the extreme degree of Rādhā's good fortune through the statements of the *gopīs*, Śukadeva himself concludes with his own words.

"Even though Kṛṣṇa is self-satisfied, He enjoyed with Rādhā because His own pleasure increases in Her company. Tn other words Kṛṣṇa does not experience the same happiness in His own self-satisfaction as He does in association with Rādhikā."

There is another reading *taya cātma-rata*. However in that version *ātmā ratah* would have the same meaning as *ātmārāma*, and thus there would be the fault of repetition or redundancy (*punar ukti*). Thus the phrase would have to be explained as follows. *Ca* means certainly, *taya* means with Rādhā and *ātmā-rāta* means to enjoy with eagerness. The word *ātmā* means intelligence, eagerness, effort and determination according to the *Amarakosa* dictionary. "Kṛṣṇa takes great effort to eagerly enjoy with Rādhā because He does not obtain the same happiness from His inner self-satisfaction (*ātmārāma*)."

It may be questioned, "If this is so, does this not indicate that Kṛṣṇa is incomplete?"

"Kṛṣṇa is unbroken and never incomplete (*akhandita*). Rādhā is Kṛṣṇa's *hlādinī-śakti* (pleasure potency), arising form His very own form (*svarūpa-bhūtā*). Though Rādhā is the form of *hlādinī-śakti*, during pastimes Her form transforms into the essence of joy called *prema*, and *prema* reaches its highest pinnacle as *mahābhāva*. Thus Kṛṣṇa enjoys more happiness with Rādhā, the topmost essence of all joy, than from the happiness arising from His own quality as *atmarama*. The *Sanat-kumāra Saṁhitā* (Text 298) says:

hlādinī ya mahā-śaktiḥ, sarva-śakti-varīyasi

tat-sara-bhava-rūpa śrī, rādhikā parikīrtitā

> "The great *śakti* called *hlādinī* is the supreme *śakti*. The essence of that *śakti* is in the form of *mahābhāva* embodied in Rādhā, who is supreme in all qualities." Also *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇī* (4.3) states: *mahābhāva-svarūpe-yaṁ*, *guṇair ativarīyasī*, "Among the cowherd girls, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is the topmost because She is the embodiment of *mahābhāva*, the highest stage of transcendental love of Godhead. No other cowherd girl possesses such high qualities as Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī."

Thus the logical connection of the words is that even though Kṛṣṇa is self-satisfied, He is eager to enjoy with Rādhā. Even though Kṛṣṇa derives personal pleasure from Rādhā, He remains unbroken and perfectly complete. In this way Kṛṣṇa enjoys His transcendental pastimes.

By this display of enjoyment Kṛṣṇa also benefits the materialistic thinkers who are ignorant of the truth about the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and He also hides the truth of His personal pleasure pastimes from them, as stated by Śukadeva Gosvāmī in the words beginning *kāmināṁ*. In other words, Śrī Kṛṣṇa taught the world that these confidential pastimes cannot be understood by persons who are under the sway of lust and women. If a man is controlled by lust, he becomes miserable and degraded. If a man is degraded, the woman becomes hardhearted.

Therefore, to establish this idea, Kṛṣṇa and His dear *gopīs* like Śrīmati Rādhikā demonstrated the example through Their actions as they jokingly talked while going here and there. Thus they hid the true nature of their *ujjvala-prema-rasa*, the most radiant form of pure, transcendental conjugal love. This explanation implies two ideas; that Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa both revealed the facts of Their *prema-rāsa* and also concealed them.

Another meaning: Kṛṣṇa enjoyed with Rādhā so that all suffering lovers seeing Kṛṣṇa's condition could understand their own miserable conditions, and all women, seeing the nature of Rādhā, could see their own hard-hearted conditions, according to the logic of *ātmavan manyate jagat*, "Everyone thinks of others according to his own position."

Another meaning: Kṛṣṇa acted as He did to show (*darśayan*) *rasikas* (those who can understand and taste transcendental mellows) that the man becomes subservient in pleading for satisfaction and the woman responds by showing reluctance. This is all done for the nourishment of *rasa*.

|| 10.30.35-36 ||

ity evaṁ darśayantyas tāś cerur gopyo vicetasaḥ

yāṁ gopīm anayat kṛṣṇo vihāyānyāḥ striyo vane

sā ca mene tadātmānaṁ variṣṭhaṁ sarva-yoṣitām

hitvā gopīḥ kāma-yānā mām asau bhajate priyaḥ

TRANSLATION

As the gopīs wandered about, their minds completely bewildered, they pointed out various signs of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. The particular gopī whom Kṛṣṇa had led into a secluded forest when He had abandoned all the other young girls began to think Herself the best of women. "My beloved has rejected all the other gopīs," She thought, "even though they are driven by Cupid himself. He has chosen to reciprocate with Me alone."

COMMENTARY

After describing the union aspect Rādhā's conjugal *rasa*, now separation will be described. The words *sā ca* (she also) indicate that previously all the other *gopīs* were intoxicated with pride over their good fortune on associating with Kṛṣṇa, and now Rādhā has also become so. The reason for this is stated by the words beginning with *hitvā* (rejecting). Rādhā felt like that because Kṛṣṇa had given up all the other gopīs who had come to fulfill their lusty desires (*kāma-yānāḥ*), or who did activities to invoke their desire, and began to serve only Her. In other words, the anger (*pūrva-māna*) that Rādhā previously felt towards the other *gopīs* over their good fortune had now vanished.

|| 10.30.37 ||

tato gatvā vanoddeśaṁ dṛptā keśavam abravīt

na pāraye 'haṁ calituṁ naya māṁ yatra te manaḥ

TRANSLATION

As the two lovers passed through one part of the Vṛndāvana forest, the special gopī began feeling proud of Herself. She told Lord Keśava, "I cannot walk any further. Please carry Me wherever You want to go."

COMMENTARY

The Divine Couple went to a particularly attractive region (*uddeśa*) of the forest. Then Rādhā, in a mood of pride (*dṛptā*), had Kesava undo the topknot that He had made earlier in jest, and tie Her hair in braids to hide Her playful dealings from Her friends. Such pride in an independent girl who has brought her boyfriend under her control is understood to enhance the conjugal mood.

Rādhā said, “I cannot go any further. I am tired from so much wandering in the forest.”

Kṛṣṇa: “O lovely woman! We still have to reach another beautiful spot further on.”

Rādhā: “Carry (*naya*) Me like before and We can go there.”

Kṛṣṇa: “Should I bring You to a flower bed inside a secluded grove up ahead where no one else can enter? Or should I take You to a flower garden to decorate You with flowers?”

Anticipating this question Rādhā said, “Take Me wherever You want.”

|| 10.30.38 ||

evam uktaḥ priyām āha skandha āruhyatām iti

tataś cāntardadhe kṛṣṇaḥ sā vadhūr anvatapyata

TRANSLATION

Thus addressed, Lord Kṛṣṇa replied, “Just climb on My shoulder.” But as soon as He said this, He disappeared. His beloved consort then immediately felt great remorse.

COMMENTARY

When Rādhā spoke like this, Kṛṣṇa began to consider as follows: “I see that Rādhā has given up Her natural behavior of being bashful and uncooperative. A proper girlfriend does not readily consent when her lover tries to bring her to a flower bed. If She has abandoned Her contrary (*vāmya*) nature, then why should I not give up My nature as a cooperative lover who faithfully follows in obedience a girlfriend He has enjoyed? This becomes necessary now. If both lovers show the same nature of being cooperative or uncooperative, there can be no tasting of *rasa*. Therefore, those who are experts in the art of love are not going to criticize Me if I give up My nature now.

"*Rasa* becomes tasteful when it properly follows the emotions of the woman. Moreover, now is the opportunity to see Rādhā, who possesses the utmost love, in the special condition that is brought about by separation from Me. This is something which I have desired to see for a long time.

"These *gopīs* have perceived the greatness of Rādhā's good fortune when She is embracing Me. Now let the other *gopīs* see the exceptional condition Rādhā attains in separation from Me. By seeing the extraordinary state of Rādhā's mental anguish, generated from Her extreme *prema* in separation, they will all drown in the ocean of amazement. Let the subterranean fire of Rādhā's separation from Me later ignite the flame of separation in all of them.

"Then, when Rādhā has experienced the fullness of both direct union and separation, this sweet mellow of conjugal love (*śṛṅgāra-rasa*) will have become complete. When by My expertise I have made Rādhā feel separation, then after My dispelling all Her pain of separation, all the *gopīs* will share the same mood, and I will be able to properly inaugurate the *rāsa* dance tonight. Otherwise, if I were to appear in front of the other *gopīs* after having enjoyed privately with only Rādhā, their minds would not be settled."

Considering all these factors, Kṛṣṇa then spoke with a desire to suddenly disappear. "He disappeared" means that even as Rādhā watched Kṛṣṇa standing there He removed Himself from Her vision.

When Vṛṣabhānunandinī said "Carry Me wherever You want," She had been thinking as follows: "Since I am tired from playing and wandering through the forest, I want to take some rest. If Kṛṣṇa spends the whole night without any sleep that will be inauspicious, and cause His unhappiness. If He is leading Me to a flower bed, let Him do so. We can take rest there together." For this reason Rādhā did not disagree.

We should understand that in this case Kṛṣṇa's *līlā-śakti*, who is full of the mood of *prema-rasa*, covered over Kṛṣṇa's awareness of what was going on in Śrīmati Rādhikā's mind in order to perfect His various pastimes. *Anvatapyata* means "Rādhā lamented over and over."

|| 10.30.39 ||

hā nātha ramaṇa preṣṭha kvāsi kvāsi mahā-bhuja

dāsyās te kṛpaṇāyā me sakhe darśaya sannidhim

TRANSLATION

She cried out: O master! My lover! O dearmost, where are You? Where are You? Please, O mighty-armed one, O friend, show Yourself to Me, Your poor servant!

COMMENTARY

Rādhā's lamentation is described in this verse. Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa had the following moving exchange:

Rādhā: "*Hā nātha*! O Lord, I am being burned in the great fire of separation from You, and My life air is about to leave My body. Even with the greatest endeavor I cannot maintain My life. But You are the Lord of My life, and so You can quickly save Me simply by glancing upon Me. Please do so immediately. I beg You to save My life, not for My sake but rather for Yours. After giving up all the other *gopīs*, You've brought Me so far to a secluded place in the forest just to enjoy special pleasure with Me. If I die You will not be able to find conjugal happiness anywhere else. You will remember Me and thus lament in Your sorrow."

Kṛṣṇa: "So let Me become unhappy. What does that matter to You?"

Rādhā: "But You are My dearmost (*preṣṭha*). I will feel Your unhappiness millions of times more than You. Even if I've already died, I still will not be able to tolerate the pain that even one spot on the nails of Your lotus feet may experience. Indeed, to prevent such pain I am ready to throw My life away millions and millions of times. Kindly show Yourself and drive away that unhappiness."

Kṛṣṇa: "But if Your life air is on the verge of leaving Your body, what can I do to stop that?"

Rādhā: "Simply by the touch of Your arms (*mahā-bhuja*), which are a medicinal herb with the power to revive the dead, My body will return to its healthy, normal condition, and My life air will automatically come back and remain in My body."

Kṛṣṇa: “But You know the forest path Yourself without My help, so why did You order Me, the king’s son and a very young and gentle boy who is to be respected? Why did You command, ‘Take Me wherever You wish’? Why do You anger Me like this?”

Rādhā cries out, “Please show Yourself to Your wretched maid-servant. Be merciful to Me! Be merciful! When I ordered You, I was overcome by sleepiness. I was so tired from playing with You. Therefore please excuse what Your poor servant said. Please don’t be angry. It was only because You treated Me like such a close friend, though I am unworthy, that I spoke like that to You.”

Kṛṣṇa: “All right, My love, I am very pleased with You, so please come to Me.”

Rādhā: “But I’ve been blinded by lamentation. I can’t see where You are. Please tell Me where You are.”

Lamenting in this way in a dizzy state generated from separation, Rādhā fell in a swoon on the earth. This is established in the next verse by the word *mohitāṁ* (bewildered).

|| 10.30.40 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

anvicchantyo bhagavato mārgaṁ gopyo ’vidūritaḥ

dadṛśuḥ priya-viśleṣān mohitāṁ duḥkhitāṁ sakhīm

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: While continuing to search out Kṛṣṇa’s path, the gopīs discovered their unhappy friend close by. She was bewildered by separation from Her lover.

COMMENTARY

While searching and searching, the *gopīs* then saw Rādhā from far off, because Her effulgence is as brilliant as lightning. All the sakhīs of both parties saw Rādhā as a friend (*sakhīm*). By seeing the intense pain that their friend (*sakhīm*) Rādhā was enduring due to separation, even rivals like Candrāvalī felt a rising of affection for Her. Also the nature of the conjugal *rasa* is that enmity and hatred among competitors turns into affection when they all experience the disturbance of separation from Kṛṣṇa. The

scripture says in this regard: *ata eva hi viśleṣe snehas tāsāṁ prakāśate*, “separation reveals externally a spontaneous affection in their hearts.”

|| 10.30.41 ||

tayā kathitam ākarṇya māna-prāptiṁ ca mādhavāt

avamānaṁ ca daurātmyād vismayaṁ paramaṁ yayuḥ

TRANSLATION

She told them how Mādhava had given Her much respect, but how She then suffered dishonor because of Her misbehavior. The gopīs were extremely amazed to hear this.

COMMENTARY

When Rādhā regained consciousness due to the loud wailing of the *gopīs* and their services of fanning, the *gopīs* asked Her, “Ah, sakhī! Please tell us what happened to You?”

Rādhā replied, “Ah, sakhīs! How have I allowed Myself to become separated from You? I am so foolish and independent. I simply do not know what is best for Me. Rather I must conclude that it is because of My hardhearted nature that 1 have received both honor and dishonor. Neglecting all of You, who have thousands of times more love for Him than Me, and causing you to burn in the fire of separation from Him, Kṛṣṇa enjoyed with Me alone. But this was simply His wickedness.”

“And it was simply wickedness for Me, being a stupid fool, to tell that mischievous son of the king, ‘I cannot walk any further; just carry Me wherever You want.’ That was My hard-heartedness, for by saying this I have obtained such dishonor. In this way My mind fell into the greatest sorrow for two reasons (His wickedness and Mine).”

Rādhā thus exhibited enmity toward Her lover, humility before the *gopīs*, and wretchedness toward Herself. When Śukadeva Gosvāmī uses the word *daurātmyā* (wickedness) he is simply repeating the words of Rādhā, like a parrot. The word *durātma* actually means one whose body (*ātmā*) is far away (*dur*) from Kṛṣṇa, or she from whom Kṛṣṇa is far. One who possesses this feeling is called *daurātmyā*. Therefore, this word indicates Rādhā’s ecstatic sentiments (*bhāva*), which are based on Her separation from Kṛṣṇa.

Being completely amazed, the *gopīs* said, “O sakhī! It was quite fitting that Kṛṣṇa gave special treatment to You alone. It was not hard-heartedness on Kṛṣṇa’s part. Your adopting a mood of controlling Your consort and ordering Him around when You were fatigued from loving pastimes is not wickedness on Your part. but rather served to enhance the loving mood. But for the favorable lover to ignore the order of a woman after enjoying her, and to then bring her to such a miserable state certainly leads to an unfortunate situation, and is an obstruction to the loving mood. This is the sign of His wickedness. Alas, alas, how has the greatest of expert lovers and the most loving ocean of mercy done such a thing?” Thus the Vraja-gopīs expressed their astonishment.

|| 10.30.42 ||

tato ’viśan vanaṁ candra jyotsnā yāvad vibhāvyate

tamaḥ praviṣṭam ālakṣya tato nivavṛtuḥ striyaḥ

TRANSLATION

In search of Kṛṣṇa, the gopīs then entered the depths of the forest as far as the light of the moon shone. But when they found themselves engulfed in darkness, they decided to turn back.

COMMENTARY

Then the *gopīs* along with Rādhā, who in Her anxiety was clutching the hand of a friend for support, began to search for Kṛṣṇa. Even though it was a full-moon night, the forest was completely dark because of the dense covering of trees. This is explained in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*:

> *praviṣṭo gahanaṁ kṛṣṇaḥ padam atra na lakṣyate*
>
> *nivartadhvaṁ śaśāṅkasya naitad dīdhiti-gocaraḥ*
>
> “One gopī said, Kṛṣṇa has entered such a dark part of the forest that we cannot possibly see His footprints. Therefore let us turn back from this area, which even the light of the moon cannot reach.”

That the *gopīs* returned because of the darkness is the external meaning. Actually they returned for the following reason. “O friends, drowning in the ocean of distress. You are shrinking back out of fear that you will not be able to see the cloud-like black body of Kṛṣṇa in this dense darkness. But don’t be embarrassed. After all, wherever you go to look for Kṛṣṇa He will simply slink away and go elsewhere. Let us not waste our time any longer, because all our endeavors will just tire His tender body.” Thinking thus, they desisted.

|| 10.30.43 ||

tan-manaskās tad-alāpās tad-viceṣṭās tad-ātmikāḥ

tad-guṇān eva gāyantyo nātmagārāṇi sasmaruḥ

TRANSLATION

Their minds absorbed in thoughts of Him, they conversed about Him, acted out His pastimes and felt themselves filled with His presence. They completely forgot about their homes as they loudly sang the glories of Kṛṣṇa’s transcendental qualities.

COMMENTARY

While the *gopīs* filled their minds with thoughts (*tan-manaskās*) of Kṛṣṇa, as they previously did, their madness (*unmāda*) became subdued, and they engaged in conversing about Him (*tad ālāpās*). They said, “O *aśvattha* tree, have you seen Kṛṣṇa?”

When the *gopīs*’ madness manifested to a moderate degree (the medium state of *unmāda*), they imitated Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes (*tad-viceṣṭās*) as in the verse *kṛṣṇāyanty apibat stanam*, “one gopī imitated Kṛṣṇa drinking milk.” When their madness reached its peak (the full state of *unmāda*), the *gopīs* forgot themselves and identified totally (*tad-ātmikāḥ*) with Kṛṣṇa, as in the verse *kṛṣṇo ’haṁ paśyata gatim*, One gopī said, “I am Kṛṣṇa, see the way I walk.”

In this way the *gopīs* forgot their identities and merged with Kṛṣṇa’s identity. Under the influence of their past habit the *gopīs* loudly sang (*gāyantyo*) about Kṛṣṇa’s wonderful qualities (*tad-guṇān*) as is described in the fourth verse of this chapter: *gāyantya uccair amum eva saṁhatā.*

|| 10.30.44 ||

punaḥ pulinam āgatya kālindyāḥ kṛṣṇa-bhāvanāḥ

samavetā jaguḥ kṛṣṇaṁ tad-āgamana-kāṅkṣitāḥ

TRANSLATION

The gopīs again came to the bank of the Kālindī. Meditating on Kṛṣṇa and eagerly hoping He would come, they sat down together to sing of Him.

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs* spoke among themselves, "Alas, alas, wherever we go to find Kṛṣṇa, He runs away from there. Why should we trouble ourselves needlessly by wandering about the forest? Without Kṛṣṇa's wish, we can never attain Him, as is stated in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (1.2.23), *yam evaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyaḥ*: 'Kṛṣṇa reveals Himself only to that person whom He chooses.'"

"In other words, only by Kṛṣṇa's mercy can we see Him. By chanting His name we will surely attain Kṛṣṇa's mercy." Thinking thus the gopīs returned (*punaḥ*) to the bank of the Yamunā, where they had previously associated with Kṛṣṇa, and engaged in singing (*Kṛṣṇa jaguḥ*) and meditating upon Kṛṣṇa (*Kṛṣṇa-bhāvanāḥ*). By their behaviour the Vraja-gopīs established the philosophical conclusion that Kṛṣṇa reveals Himself according to His free will.

Thus ends the commentary on the Thirtieth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Thirty-one

The Gopīs Songs of Separation (Gopī-gītā)

[Editor's note: This chapter relates how the *gopīs*, overwhelmed by feelings of separation from Kṛṣṇa, sat down on the bank of the Yamunā after continuously searching for Kṛṣṇa for a long time. Each gopī began addressing Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the personal manifestation of all enjoyable tastes, according to her individual mode of ecstasy and praying for His merciful *darśana*. As the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa spontaneously arose in the minds of the *gopīs*, whose consciousness was fully imbued with His presence, they sang their song (*Gopī-gītā*), which relieves the agony of those suffering from the burning pain of separation from Kṛṣṇa and which bestows supreme auspiciousness.

Although the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* says that Kṛṣṇa was not physically present before the *gopīs* while they were speaking, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, by the power of His *prema*-filled vision, reveals some extremely charming dialogues between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*. He also describes the beautiful thoughts of the gopīs while they were crying out to Kṛṣṇa. In presenting Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's commentaries on each verse, we have given Śrī Kṛṣṇa's direct responses to the *gopīs*' questions and statements, rather than introducing Kṛṣṇa's words with phrases such as, "In response to the *gopī's* question, Kṛṣṇa might have replied as follows." In this regard, some *ācāryas* state that Kṛṣṇa was hiding in the bushes just beside the *gopīs* listening to their every love-filled utterance.]

|| 10.31.1 ||

gopya ūcuḥ

jayati te ʼdhikaṁ janmanā vrajaḥ śrayata indirā śaśvad atra hi

dayita dṛśyatāṁ dikṣu tāvakās tvayi dhṛtāsavas tvāṁ vicinvate

TRANSLATION

The gopīs said: O beloved, Your birth in the land of Vraja has made it exceedingly glorious, and thus Indirā, the goddess of fortune, always resides here. It is only for Your sake that we, Your devoted servants, maintain our lives. We have been searching everywhere for You, so please show Yourself to us.

COMMENTARY

This chapter shines forth with the *Gopī-gītā*, the songs of the *gopīs*, which are like a group of lotus flowers fragrant with the honey of *prema*, that manifest their sweetness in graceful melodies and rhythms. These lotus songs attract the bee named Kṛṣṇa.

With the blessings of Sanātana Gosvāmī, Śrīdhara Svāmī and the *gurus* in my line, whose remnants are the sustenance of my life, I will now begin to explain the *Gopī-gītā*. In the last verse of the previous chapter it was mentioned that the *gopīs* sang. The question may be raised, "What did they sing?" The answer is given in this verse beginning with the words *gopyaḥ ūcuh*.

The *gopīs* sang, "O beloved, because of Your birth, Vraja has become glorious." By not mentioning more glorious than what, the implication is that Vraja is more glorious than all other planets or places. In order to refute the idea that "Vaikuṇṭha is just as glorious," the *gopīs* use the adverb *adhikam*, to indicate that Vraja is exceedingly (*adhikaṁ*) more glorious than even Vaikuṇṭha. In other words, though Vaikuṇṭha is wonderful, Vraja is the most wonderful and best of all places.

The *gopīs* state another symptom of Vraja's unique position: "Mahā Laksmī, the goddess of fortune (*indirā*), who is served by all in Vaikuṇṭha, is always residing in Vraja rendering service. Therefore Vraja is complete in all kinds of opulences even more so than Vaikuṇṭha itself. Thus in this Vraja, which is filled with such topmost happiness, only Your beloved girlfriends are experiencing the most intolerable agony unheard of or unseen by anyone at any time. However, we are not begging You to remove that suffering, but please look (*dṛśyatāṁ*) just once at this (*atra*) Vṛndāvana, which is filled with happiness."

Kṛṣṇa asks, "What should I look at?"

Gopīs: “In this happy Vṛndāvana, those dedicated to You are dying in separation as they search for You. What a remarkable scene! Why are You putting Your devotees into danger? You should not think, ‘How have I put you in difficulty?’ We have offered (*dhṛta: ārpita*) all our life airs to You. We would have been happy if the life airs, which have been maddened by You, remaining within our bodies had burned in the fire of separation and we had died. But instead, our life airs are happily residing within You, their joyful master.”

Kṛṣṇa: “But if your life airs are happily situated, how can your bodies be in danger?

Gopīs: It seems that You derive constant happiness from seeing our misery.”

In this verse the second syllable (*ya*) of each line is the same. Also, for most of the verses in the *Gopī-gītā*, in each line the first and seventh syllables begin with the same consonant, as do the second syllables of all four lines. This has been described in the *Muktā-phala-Tīkā* of Vopadeva.

|| 10.31.2 ||

śarad-udāśaye sādhu-jāta-sat-sarasijodara-śrī-muṣā dṛśā

surata-nātha te ‘śulka-dāsikā vara-da nighnato neha kiṁ vadhaḥ

TRANSLATION

O Lord of love, in beauty Your glance excels the whorl of the finest, most perfectly formed lotus within the autumn pond. O bestower of benedictions, You are killing the maidservants who have given themselves to You freely, without any price. Isn’t this murder?

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, How can you insinuate that I want to make you unhappy?

Gopīs: “Not only do You want to see us suffer, but You are killing us.” That is the intention of this verse.

Gopīs: “Your glances beg us for amorous pleasure (*surata nātha*) and give us (*vara-da*) happiness. Moreover, Your glances, which are emanating the blazing fire of *prema*, are

killing (*nighnataḥ*) Your maidservants who were purchased for free (*aśulka dāsikā*). Is this not murder on Your part? Is only killing with a weapon actual murder, while murder with one's eyes is not murder? Rather it certainly is.

"Therefore O Varada [giver (*da*) of benedictions (*vara*)]! You have ruined (*da* from *di* to destroy) our happiness in this world and the next (*vara*). Furthermore, if we were in fact Your property, then there would be no fault in Your throwing away or burning up Your own possessions. But actually You did not buy us with any payment, nor have You accepted us in marriage. We are just free maid-servants. Due to our innocent foolishness, we became Your slaves out of our own free will."

In describing the beauty of Kṛṣṇa's glance, the *gopīs* indicate the cause of Kṛṣṇa's power to enchant, madden and to expertly steal their hearts.

Gopīs: "Your glance steals the beauty of the best blooming lotus (*sat sarsi ja*) growing in the clear lakes of autumn in the saintly land (*sādhu jātaṁ*) of Vraja." In this way the *gopīs* describe the extra-ordinary beauty, fragrance, coolness and gentleness of Kṛṣṇa's eyes by comparing them to the superexcellent autumnal lotus flower.

Gopīs: "Indeed, that glance of Yours has trespassed into the private inner chambers of such a respectable person of good upbringing, which are completely inaccessible to the common man, and stolen the treasure. By sprinkling a powder (a standard technique of Vedic burglars) of *mohana* (bewilderment) and *unmāda* (madness), Your thieving eyes made us crazy, and thus we freely turned over the treasure of our intimate love and also our life airs. Having our treasures stolen, we are now dying. By this theft You are willingly accepting the sin of killing thousands of women. Out of fear of this sin You should reveal Yourself to us."

|| 10.31.3 ||

viṣa-jalāpyayād vyāla-rākṣasād varṣa-mārutād vaidyutānalāt

vṛṣa-mayātmajād viśvato bhayād ṛṣabha te vayaṁ rakṣitā muhuḥ

TRANSLATION

O greatest of personalities, You have repeatedly saved us from all kinds of danger—from poisoned water, from the terrible man-eater Agha, from the great rains, from the wind demon, from the fiery thunderbolt of Indra, from the bull demon and from the son of Māyā Dānava.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa may object, “If I wanted to kill you, then why did I repeatedly protect you from so many dangers? After acting so it would be inappropriate for Me to kill you now.” The *gopīs* reply to this in the current verse. “You saved us from destruction by Kāliya’s poison (*viṣa-jalāpyayād*); from the vicious man eating snake Aghāsura (*vyāla-rākṣasād*); from Indra’s torrential downpour (*varṣa*); from Tṛṇāvarta’s typhoon (*mārutāt*); from Indra’s thunderbolt (*vaidyuta-analāt*); from the bull demon Ariṣṭāsura (*vṛṣa*) and from Vyomāsura (*maya-ātmajāt*).

“You have always protected us from all types of fear (*viśvato-bhayād*). O best of men (*ṛṣabha*)! On numerous occasions You personally saved us, whose lives are dedicated solely to You. You have protected all of Vraja from the deluge of Indra and other calamities. Putting our faith in You as our protector, we come to You for relief from the burning pain of being pierced by the five arrows of Cupid. If You neglect us, we will die in the blazing fire of separation from you which is millions of times more intense than that other fire. Are You not afraid of killing those who place their trust in You?”

Although the killing of Ariṣṭa and Vyoma are yet to occur, it is mentioned here because the *gopīs*, having heard about Kṛṣṇa’s horoscope from the sages Garga and Bhāguri, knew that Kṛṣṇa would kill these demons in the future.

|| 10.31.4 ||

na khalu gopīkā-nandano bhavān akhila-dehinām antarātma-dṛk

vikhanasārthito viśva-guptaye sakha udeyivān sātvatāṁ kule

TRANSLATION

You are not actually the son of the gopī Yaśodā, O friend, but rather the indwelling witness in the hearts of all embodied souls. Because Lord Brahmā prayed for You to come and protect the universe, You have now appeared in the Sātvata dynasty.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “My dear *gopīs*, who are repeatedly talking irrationally, please maintain your composure. I, the son of Nanda, give happiness to everyone (*sarvānanda-kanda*). Yet you accuse Me of the sin of killing women and betraying the faith of those who trust Me.

Therefore, I will leave this place and hide Myself so that for many births you will not see Me."

Fearing such a response from Kṛṣṇa, the repentant *gopīs* began to praise Kṛṣṇa in order to please Him.

Gopīs: "You are not the son of a cowherd woman, but rather the soul within each living entity, the form of Vāsudeva who inspires the living entities' internal faculties and witnesses (*dṛk*) everything. In other words, You are the indwelling Supersoul (*antaryāmi*). We have heard this from Bhāguri, Gārgi, Paurṇamāsi and others.

"Thus, we are only speaking whatever You, the Supersoul, inspire us to speak. Therefore do not be angry with us, but be pleased with us. We have also heard about the cause for Your appearance. Because Brahmā (*vikhanas*) prayed to You to protect the universe (*viśva-guptaye*), You appeared in the Sātvata dynasty in the family of Yadu. In other words, You have appeared on the sunrise-mountain of mother Yaśodā's womb,"

Kṛṣṇa: "If you know all this, then why are you speaking such harsh words to Me?"

Fearing such a comment by Kṛṣṇa, the *gopīs* said, "O friend (*sakhe*)! You have submerged us in the ocean of loving friendship (*sakhya-rasa*) with You. As a friend You protect the whole universe, so You should also protect us who reside within the universe."

Another meaning: Gopīs: "No one, among men, demigods, animals or birds can bear to see the suffering of those who are dear to them. In that You remain happy even while observing our misery, we must conclude that You are outside these four categories of creatures. It is not possible that You were born from the womb of the gopī Yaśodā, because her heart melts at even the slightest distress felt by another. But we do not see any of her good qualities in You."

Kṛṣṇa: "Then who am I?"

Gopīs: "We surmise that You are the indwelling controller (*antaryāmī*) of all living beings. Though seeing all the sufferings of the living entities, You remain passive sitting

happily within their hearts as the Supersoul. Therefore, we cannot understand why You, the crest-jewel of indifferent persons, have appeared in this world. Requested by Vikhanas, Brahmā, who desired to increase his own creation, You descended to this universe to protect it. But, bearing in mind that by devotion to You the living entities will become liberated, You stay hidden (*viśva guptaye*), so that no one will recognize You as the Supreme Lord.

"As Lord Brahmā once said, 'What to speak of ordinary men, who disregard You as the Lord in Your human-like pastimes, even those surrendered to You, like Jarāsandha, will take on the role of demons. Thus I will be able to increase the scope of my creation.' To fulfill this desire of Brahmā, You accept actions contrary to *dharma* such as stealing the wives and possessions of others, and showing envy, pride and violence to hide Your true nature. Thus rejecting Your own irrefutable laws of religious behavior, You have appeared in the *Sātvata* family in Gokula. By Your stealing of other men's wives You have become our friend (*he sakhe*)"

|| 10.31.5 ||

viracitābhayaṁ vṛṣṇi-dhūrya te caraṇam īyuṣāṁ saṁsṛter bhayāt

kara-saroruhaṁ kānta kāma-daṁ śirasi dhehi naḥ śrī-kara-graham

TRANSLATION

O best of the Vṛṣṇis, Your lotuslike hand, which holds the hand of the goddess of fortune, grants fearlessness to those who approach Your feet out of fear of material existence. O lover, please place that wish-fulfilling lotus hand on our heads.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, "O wonderful speakers! I disappeared only to drink the nectar of your words of loving anger. Now I that have fulfilled that desire, you can take any boon you wish from Me."

Thinking of such merciful words from Kṛṣṇa, the *gopīs*, being relieved, began to voice their individual desires in four verses (5-8).

Gopīs: "O best of the Vṛṣṇis! O light giving sun to the lotuses of Your family! Please place Your lotus hand on our heads?"

Kṛṣṇa: “Why?”

Gopīs: “The touch of Your hand vanquishes Cupid (*kāma-dam*), in fear of whose arrows we have surrendered unto You. Though ironically that hand again makes us lusty (another meaning of *kāma-daṁ*). You cannot say that You are powerless to do this, since Your hand bestows fearlessness to men who have surrendered to you out of fear of material existence. You are the one who protects everyone from the fear of *saṁsāra*, so what effort would it take to protect a person from the fear of lust?”

Kṛṣṇa: “If that is so, may I then place My lotus hand on your breasts? My mind desires to put My hands there instead.”

Gopīs: “No, Your hands are already held by the hands of Laksmī (*Śrī-kara-graham*) in order to prevent You from placing Your hands on her breasts, so we must also prevent that.”

|| 10.31.6 ||

vraja-janārti-han vīra yoṣitāṁ nija-jana-smaya-dhvaṁsana-smita

bhaja sakhe bhavat-kiṅkarīḥ sma no jalaruhānanaṁ cāru darśaya

TRANSLATION

O You who destroy the suffering of Vraja’s people, O hero of all women, Your smile shatters the false pride of Your devotees. Please, dear friend, accept us as Your maidservants and show us Your beautiful lotus face.

COMMENTARY

Other *gopīs* said, “You take away the pain arising from the arrows of Cupid in the women of Vraja by Your smile, but not the pain of the women in Svarga and elsewhere.” This is mentioned in the *Bhagavatam* (10.35.3): *vyoma-yāna-vanitāḥ kaśmalaṁ yayur apasmṛta-nīvyaḥ*, “The women of Svarga riding in their planes in the sky fainted from the pain of lust and their belts loosened.”

Gopīs: “O hero, who vanquishes the invincible Cupid! You do not tolerate the pride stemming from our good fortune and the haughtiness which is characteristic of our coquettish (*vāmya*) nature. Your smile destroys the pride of Your devotees.”

Kṛṣṇa: “Then quickly choose your desired boon”

Gopīs: “Please serve us, Your maidservants.”

Kṛṣṇa: “But if you are My maidservants, then why are you ordering Me to engage in your menial service?”

The *gopīs* answer by saying, “O friend (*sakhe*)!

Kṛṣṇa: “Then tell me what service you want Me to perform?”

Gopīs: “Please serve us by showing us Your beautiful lotus face (*jalaruhānanam*).”

|| 10.31.7 ||

praṇata-dehināṁ pāpa-karṣaṇaṁ tṛṇa-carānugaṁ śrī-niketanam

phaṇi-phaṇārpitaṁ te padāmbujaṁ kṛṇu kuceṣu naḥ kṛndhi hṛc-chayam

TRANSLATION

Your lotus feet destroy the past sins of all embodied souls who surrender to them. Those feet follow after the cows in the pastures and are the eternal abode of the goddess of fortune. Since You once put those feet on the hoods of the great serpent Kāliya, please place them upon our breasts and tear away the lust in our hearts.

COMMENTARY

Other *gopīs* said, “Please place Your lotus feet upon our breasts.”

Kṛṣṇa: “Why should I do that?”

Gopīs: “In order to shatter the lust in our hearts.”

Here these *gopīs*, who by the fact of having such intimate relations with Kṛṣṇa are understood as possessing the highest form of pure *kṛṣṇa-prema*; who have no desire to avoid pain or obtain happiness for themselves, and whose every activity of their bodies, minds and words is only for Kṛṣṇa's happiness, are describing their own beauty, youthfulness and torment by lust only for the sake of inciting Kṛṣṇa's enjoyment of conjugal pleasure.

Being the most skillful of women, the *gopīs* are not actually diminishing the mood of pure love by their verbal levity. When a friend sees that a certain gluttonous friend of his wants to eat, he will busy himself in acquiring all four kinds of first-class food with the desire of feeding his friend. But when questioned by his friend, he will say, "Oh, I am endeavoring for my own sake, not yours." At that time love becomes very intense. If the friend were to say, "All this endeavor on my part is for your pleasure, although it is actually for my own benefit, since it is being done without motive," that would diminish the mood of love.

This is stated in the *Prema-sampuṭa* Text 68:

premā dvayo rasikayor ayi dīpa eva,

hṛd-veṣma bhāsayati niścala eva bhāti,

dvārād ayaṁ vadanatas tu bahis-kṛtaś cet,

nirvāti śīghram athavā laghutām upaiti

> "Pure love is like a lamp that burns steadily within the house of two lovers' hearts who know how to relish confidential mellows. But if that lamp light is let out through the doorway of the mouth, it is at once dimmed or extinguished."

The fact that the *gopīs* have no interest in their own pleasure, and that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is under their control is indicated by the Lord's own words *na pāraye 'ham*, "I can never repay My debt to you." (SB 10.32.22) All the revealed scriptures state that Kṛṣṇa is controlled only by pure love, not lust.

Anticipating that Kṛṣṇa may say, “If I place My feet on your breasts, I fear that I will commit sin,” the *gopīs* say, “Since You are the destroyer of the sins of all embodied beings who surrender to You, how can there any question of Your sinfulness?”

Kṛṣṇa: “But if I place My tender feet on your hard breasts, I will get pain.”

Gopīs: “You follow the cows that go to very rough places to eat grass. If Your feet can tolerate that, then You cannot say that our breasts are too hard.”

Kṛṣṇa: “It is inappropriate to place My feet on your breasts which are decorated with many costly jewels and ornaments.”

Gopīs: “Your lotus feet, the very abode of all opulence (*śrī niketana*), will be the best ornament on our breasts.”

Kṛṣṇa: “But I am afraid of your husbands.”

Gopīs: “If You were not afraid when You placed Your feet on the hoods of the great serpent Kāliya, then why should You be afraid of our weak husbands?”

|| 10.31.8 ||

madhurayā girā valgu-vākyayā budha-manojñayā puṣkarekṣaṇa

vidhi-karīr imā vīra muhyatīr adhara-sīdhunāpyāyayasva naḥ

TRANSLATION

O lotus-eyed one, Your sweet voice and charming words, which attract the minds of the intelligent, are bewildering us more and more. Our dear hero, please revive Your maidservants with the nectar of Your lips.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “O *gopīs*, who are more dear to Me than My own life. O jewel-like lovers! I can never be indifferent to you, who are My only reason for living. Why do you not have faith in this servant who is bound by the golden chains of your pure love? Please trust Me, and understand Me to be like the brilliant gold bangles on your auspicious hands.”

Hearing such words from Kṛṣṇa, other *gopīs* said, “We have become overcome with bliss on tasting the sweetness of Your words, which are composed of sweet (*madhurayā*) syllables containing various meanings in each beautiful phrase. Moreover, Your wonderful words bewilder those who are intelligent and expert in conjugal affairs, namely these maidservants of Yours. We *gopīs* are becoming bewitched by continually relishing Your sweetness. Please rejuve-nate us bewildered women by letting us again (*punaḥ*) drink the nectar of Your lips.”

Another meaning: “Please let us bewildered women drink the nectar of Your lips, and again (*punaḥ*) put us into bewilderment.”

|| 10.31.9 ||

tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanaṁ kavibhir īḍitaṁ kalmaṣāpaham

śravaṇa-maṅgalaṁ śrīmad ātataṁ bhuvi gṛṇanti ye bhūri-dā janāḥ

TRANSLATION

The nectar of Your words and the descriptions of Your activities are the life and soul of those suffering in this material world. These narrations, transmitted by learned sages, eradicate one’s sinful reactions and bestow good fortune upon whoever hears them. These narrations are broadcast all over the world and are filled with spiritual power. Certainly those who spread the message of Godhead are most munificent.

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs* said, “Who can describe the sweetness of the words coming from Your mouth? It is indescribable. Even words glorifying Your name and form coming from the mouths of other people are also more relishable than celestial nectar (*svarga-amṛta*) or liberation (*mokṣa*).” This is the import of this verse.

Gopīs: ‘’Discussions about You deliver the highest nectar.”

Kṛṣṇa: “What kind of nectar?”

Gopīs: “Topics about You give life to those who are tormented by the cycle of birth and death, terrible diseases, and other causes of suffering (*taptajīvanam*). They give life to those who are suffering in separation from You. Thus *hari-kathā* is better than both the nectar of heaven and the nectar of liberation.” This is confirmed by great devotees (*kavibhir īḍitaṁ*) like Prahlāda and Dhruva, who said: *yā nirvṛtis tanu-bhṛtāṁ tava pāda-padma, dhyānād bhavaj-jana-kathā-śravaṇena vā syāt, sā brahmaṇi sva-mahimany api nātha mā bhūt*, “My Lord, the transcendental bliss derived from meditating upon Your lotus feet or hearing about Your glories from pure devotees is so unlimited that it is far beyond the stage of *brahmāṇanda*.” (SB 4.9.10)

“Since *brahmāṇanda* is also defeated by the transcendental bliss derived from devotional service, then what to speak of the temporary joy of elevating oneself to the heavenly planets, which is ended by the separating sword of time? Although one may be elevated to the heavenly planets, he falls down in due course of time.”

“The nectar of Your topics destroys (*kalmasa apaharanam*) the effects of all stages of sin (*aprārabdha, kūṭa, bīja* and *prārabhda*, sinful reactions from which one is suffering at present). The nectar of Svarga does not destroy sins, but rather it increases lusty desire, which is a cause for sin. Even the nectar of liberation does not destroy *prārabdha-karma*, though it destroys *aprārabdha*, *kūṭa* and *bīja*. The nectar of hearing about You is most auspicious (*śravaṇa maṅgalaṁ*) because just by hearing one becomes attracted to You and attains the ultimate goal of life. This is not so with the nectar of Svarga or *mokṣa*.”

“The nectar of Your topics, being constantly broadcast (*ātataṁ*) by Your devotees, bestows all wealth (*śrīmat*) up to *prema*. The other two nectars cannot do this. Those who glorify You in *kirtana* (*gṛṇanti*) are bestowing the greatest treasure. Though one may give that person everything he owns, he can never repay him.”

Another meaning of the verse: “Songs about Your name, form and pastimes are sweet if they are accompanied by the sight of You. Otherwise they create very undesirable consequences and become a cause of death (*kathā mṛtam*).”

Kṛṣṇa: “How is that?”

Gopīs: “By hearing those descriptions one’s life becomes full of pain in separation (*tapta jīvanam*).” Another meaning of jīvana is water. “By those descriptions we become scalded like water (*jīvana*) sprinkled on hot oil (*tapta*).”

Kṛṣṇa: “But then why are these topics praised in the *Purāṇas* and other scriptures?”

Gopīs: “Only poets (*kavibhir īḍitaṁ*) like Vyāsa praise You and no one else because that is the natural habit of poets. Hearing about You subjects one to the burning pain of separation. By this suffering one burns up his previous sins (*kalmaṣa apaham*). It is auspicious (*mangalam:svasty-ayanam*) for ordinary people to listen to these topics, and thus the narrations about You do not stop. If the people concerned are intelligent, however, they will see that hearing about You brings suffering and then they will refuse to listen. Then the narrations will cease.”

“Topics about You are disseminated (*ātataṁ*) by evil men who, blinded by the intoxication of their wealth (*śrīmat*), hope that everyone will die by hearing about You. To accomplish this they spend money lavishly by going from country to country and village to village, hiring *pandits* to narrate the *Purāṇas*. Therefore those *pandits* who sing Your glories in this world cause the death (*da— dyanti: khandayanti: mārayanti*) of many people (*bhūrīn*). Thus, while spreading their trap of these topics and sitting peacefully as if they were gentle souls, these *pandits* are actually committing genocide.”

“For this reason, intelligent persons avoid these *pandits*, keeping them at a further distance than even a contagious disease.”

This point is explained in the *Bhāgavatam* (10.47.18):

> *yad-anucarita-līlā-karṇa-pīyūṣa-vipruṭ-*
>
> *sakṛd-adana-vidhūta-dvandva-dharmā vinaṣṭāḥ*
>
> *sapadi gṛha-kuṭumbaṁ dīnam utsṛjya dīnā*
>
> *bahava iha vihaṅgā bhikṣu-caryāṁ caranti*

> “For those who relish just a single drop of the nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s daily pastimes, their dedication to material duality is ruined. Many such persons have suddenly given up their wretched homes and families and, themselves becoming wretched, traveled here to Vṛndāvana to wander about like birds, begging for their living.”

This dialogue of the *gopīs* is glorification on the pretext of condemnation. Using the ploy of criticism, the *gopīs* are actually expressing the super excellence of topics about Śrī Kṛṣṇa and also of the *pandits* who narrate them.

|| 10.31.10 ||

prahasitaṁ priya-prema-vīkṣaṇaṁ viharaṇaṁ ca te dhyāna-maṅgalam

rahasi saṁvido yā hṛdi spṛśaḥ kuhaka no manaḥ kṣobhayanti hi

TRANSLATION

Your smiles, Your sweet, loving glances, the intimate pastimes and confidential talks we enjoyed with You—all these are auspicious to meditate upon, and they touch our hearts. But at the same time, O deceiver, they very much agitate our minds.

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs* said, "When we do not see You, then anything that is related to You becomes a source of suffering for us. Even though we want to forget You because You give us sorrow, we cannot because You have touched our hearts (*hṛdi spṛśaḥ*) with Your sweet smile (*prahasitaṁ*) and love-filled glances, Your intimate exchanges (*viharaṇaṁ: śamprayogaḥ*), and all Your joking conversations (*saṁvidaḥ: samlāpa-narmāṇi*). It is a fact that meditation gives the highest bliss (*dhyāna-maṇgalaṁ*), but thinking of these four things (Your smile, glances, exchanges and conversations) agitates (*kṣobhayanti*) our minds."

"As soon as these enter our minds, they immediately give pleasure, but then a moment later they give the most intense sorrow. Therefore, You are the greatest cheater (*kuhaka*)! When the rogue feeds you poison cakes, at first they seem tasty, but after some time they give intense pain and then kill you."

|| 10.31.11 ||

calasi yad vrajāc cārayan paśūn nalina-sundaraṁ nātha te padam

śila-tṛṇāṅkuraiḥ sīdatīti naḥ kalīlātāṁ manaḥ kānta gacchati

TRANSLATION

Dear master, dear lover, when You leave the cowherd village to herd the cows, our minds are disturbed with the thought that Your feet, more beautiful than a

lotus, will be pricked by the spiked husks of grain and the rough grass and plants.

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs* said, “Furthermore, You are not only making us miserable today, but on other occasions You also try to give us sorrow, even at the cost of making Yourself unhappy. Our minds become pained (*kalilatāṁ*) when we think of Your feet, which are more beautiful and tender than a lotus, being pricked by the spikes of wheat, dry grass and fresh sprouts in the pasture grounds as You walk behind the cows.”

The word *kalilatāṁ* also means accepting (*lāti*) quarrel (*kali*).

Gopīs: “Thus we quarrel with our minds as follows: O mind, why are you uselessly lamenting? If Kṛṣṇa gets pain from walking in the forests, then why does He daily go into the forest from Vraja?”

Mind: “Ah, foolish cowherd maidens! The soles of Kṛṣṇa’s feet are more tender than even a land lotus (*sthala-padma*), and the forest is filled with thorns, grass, sprouting plants and pebbles. How then will Kṛṣṇa not experience pain?”

Gopīs: “O foolish mind! Kṛṣṇa is walking on very soft sandy pathways.”

Mind: “O undiscerning cowherd women! The cows are wandering on those paths eating the grass, not Kṛṣṇa.”

Gopīs: “O mind, blinded by love! Doesn’t Kṛṣṇa have eyes to see the stones and thorns? Why would He step on them?”

Mind: “Ah, you girls lack even a touch of *prema*! What will happen if by mistake or because of haste, Kṛṣṇa steps on those sharp things?”

Gopīs: “O mind, our dear brother! You speak correctly. The creator has given us life only to make us experience all this misery.”

Mind: “My dear miserable girls, you should remain alive. But now I, along with your life airs, am going to leave Your bodies.”

|| 10.31.12 ||

dina-parikṣaye nīla-kuntalair vanaruhānanaṁ bibhrad āvṛtam

ghana-rajasvalaṁ darśayan muhur manasi naḥ smaraṁ vīra yacchasi

TRANSLATION

At the end of the day You repeatedly show us Your lotus face, covered with dark blue locks of hair and thickly powdered with dust. Thus, O hero, You arouse lusty desires in our minds.

COMMENTARY

“Even when we meet, You are not willing to make us happy,” the *gopīs* state in this verse.

The *gopīs* said, “In the late afternoon (*dina parikṣaye*), You satisfy us by showing us Your lotus face, decorated with pollen from swaying garlands, with dark blue locks swaying in the gentle breeze, and covered with the dust (*rajasvalam*) raised by the cows’ (*ghana*) hooves. Knowing that the sight of You generates the highest bliss, You become visible to us as You collect the cows or look here and there for the cowherd boys. At this time You consider, ‘I will drown these girls in an ocean of distress,’ and then You enflame our erotic desires (*smaram yaccasi*) but deny us Your association.”

“That same person who has made us consider the path of religiosity of well-bred women to be like a feverish poison and has made us madly intoxicated, is now making us cry and attracting us to join Him in the forests. O hero (*vīra*)! You shoot us with Cupid’s arrows in order to destroy the religious principles of us women of Vraja.”

|| 10.31.13 ||

praṇata-kāma-daṁ padmajārcitaṁ dharaṇi-maṇḍanaṁ dhyeyam āpadi

caraṇa-paṅkajaṁ śantamaṁ ca te ramaṇa naḥ staneṣv arpayādhi-han

TRANSLATION

Your lotus feet, which are worshiped by Lord Brahmā, fulfill the desires of all who bow down to them. They are the ornament of the earth, they give the highest satisfaction, and in times of danger they are the appropriate object of meditation. O lover, O destroyer of anxiety, please put those lotus feet upon our breasts.

COMMENTARY

"If you are always thinking that I give you sorrow, then I am not going to have anything more to do with you." Fearing that Kṛṣṇa will become angry like this, the *gopīs* repent saying, "Alas, alas, blinded by the suffering inflicted by our karma, we are falsely finding fault with our beloved."

Then in order to please Kṛṣṇa the *gopīs* praise Him as the person who gives all happiness. After affirming that He is their goal, they then pray that Kṛṣṇa relieve them of their suffering in two verses.

The *gopīs* said, "Though Kāliya was an offender, when he surrendered (*praṇata*) You gave him the most desired thing (*kāma-daṁ*), Your lotus feet. Brahmā (*padma-ja*) also offended You, but he was forgiven when he worshiped (*arcitaṁ*) Your lotus feet. Therefore we pray that You also forgive our offense."

"As Your feet decorate the earth (*dhariṇi maṇḍanaṁ*), You should also decorate our breasts by placing Your feet on them. Garga Muni predicted, 'This boy will easily protect you from all dangers.' Accordingly we pray that You deliver us from this misfortune. For all these reasons, You are most auspicious and the very form of happiness (*śantamaṁ*). O destroyer of distress (*adhi han*)! By putting Your feet on our breasts, You will not become tired, but rather You will feel pleasure (*ramaṇa*) and Your lusty desires will be fulfilled."

|| 10.31.14 ||

surata-vardhanaṁ śoka-nāśanaṁ svarita-veṇunā suṣṭhu cumbitam

itara-rāga-vismāraṇaṁ nṛṇāṁ vitara vīra nas te 'dharāmṛtam

TRANSLATION

O hero, kindly distribute to us the nectar of Your lips, which enhances conjugal pleasure and vanquishes grief. That nectar is thoroughly relished by Your vibrating flute and makes people forget any other attachment.

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs* said, "O Kṛṣṇa, You exactly resemble Dhanvantari, the crest-jewel of physicians. Please give us some medicine, for we are fainting from the disease of lust. The medicinal nectar of Your lips enhances (*vardhanaṁ*) erotic pleasure (*surata*), and removes the pain of separation (*śoka nāśanaṁ*). You should not say, 'How can I give such valuable medicine for free,' because You are a great hero (*vīra*) in giving charity. Therefore, You should give it away freely, even to the most wretched persons. Consider that we are losing our lives and that now You can save us by giving us that nectar. After all, even Your flute, which is just a hollow bamboo stick, fully tastes the nectar of Your lips, and then exhales sweet melodies (*svarita veṇunā*)."

Kṛṣṇa: "But the people in this world follow a very unhealthy diet of attachment to wealth, family, followers and so forth. I will not give the particular medicine you've requested to such people."

Gopīs: "But the medicinal nectar of Your lips makes one forget (*vismāraṇaṁ*) all other (*itara*) attachments (*rāga*). We have directly experienced that this remarkable medicine acts like a powerful herbal drug which counteracts bad dietary habits. Therefore, please give that nectar to us, O hero, since You are most charitable."

|| 10.31.15 ||

aṭati yad bhavān ahni kānanaṁ truṭi yugāyate tvām apaśyatām

kuṭila-kuntalaṁ śrī-mukhaṁ ca te jaḍa udīkṣatāṁ pakṣma-kṛd dṛśām

TRANSLATION

When You go off to the forest during the day, a tiny fraction of a second becomes like a millennium for us because we cannot see You. And even when we can eagerly look upon Your beautiful face, so lovely with its adornment of curly locks, our pleasure is hindered by our eyelids, which were fashioned by the foolish creator.

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs* said, “Moreover, Kṛṣṇa, our bad destiny alone is the cause of our grief. What can You do about it?” The Vraja-gopīs convey this idea in this verse.

Gopīs: “When You go to the forest of Vṛndāvana, a *truṭi* (1/1700 of a second) seems like a millennium (*yugāyate*) for us because we cannot see You. The pain of separation makes the eight hours You are away in the forest seem like three months for the other inhabitants of Vraja. But for us *gopīs*, this eight hour period seems as long as a billion ages. There is no cause for this except our bad fortune. Even when we get the opportunity to see Your face at the end of the day, the foolish creator makes us suffer by giving us eye lids to interrupt our vision of You. Thus even in seeing You we are thrown into an insurmountable ocean of suffering. The fraction of a second that an eyelid blinks is an interruption to our sight of You. Although it only takes nine hundred *truṭis* for the eye to blink (*nimeṣa*), it seems like nine hundred *yugas* to us. Thus we are so unfortunate that we suffer whether we see You or not.”

According to Maitreya Ṛṣi, “The time duration needed for the integration of three *trāsareṇus* is called a *truṭi*, and one hundred *truṭis* make one *vedha*. Three *vedhas* make one *lava*. The duration of time of three *lavas* is equal to one *nimeṣa*, the combination of three *nimeṣas* makes one *kṣaṇa*” (SB 3.11.6)

There is another meaning of the phrase *pakṣma kṛt*. The first meaning refers to Lord Brahmā as the maker (*kṛt*) of the eyelid (*pakṣma*). Another meaning of *pakṣma kṛt* is “cutting off the eyelid.”

Gopīs: “Those who are intelligent (*ajaḍa*) would cut off their eyelids so they could see Kṛṣṇa continuously. Being unintelligent, we *gopīs* cannot do that.”

|| 10.31.16 ||

pati-sutānvaya-bhrātṛ-bāndhavān ativilaṅghya te ’nty acyutāgatāḥ

gati-vidas tavodgīta-mohitāḥ kitava yoṣitaḥ kas tyajen niśi

TRANSLATION

Dear Acyuta, You know very well why we have come here. Who but a cheater like You would abandon young women who come to see Him in the middle of the night, enchanted by the loud song of His flute? Just to see You, we have completely rejected our husbands, children, ancestors, brothers and other relatives.

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs* who, at the time of hearing Kṛṣṇa's flute, were locked in the inner rooms of their houses by their husbands, now speak jealously in this verse.

"Knowing (*vidas*) the tenth and last stage (*gatī*), we have reached the end of our lives and come to You. Though we are in this exalted state, You have disappointed us and failed to let us see You. Though You are called Acyuta (infallible), how have You now become fallen?"

Kṛṣṇa replied, "Then why have You come here?"

Gopīs: "Bewildered by hearing the loud song (*udgīta*) of Your flute, we lost all discrimination (*mohitāḥ*) and rushed here."

Kṛṣṇa: "Ah, foolish girls! If that is so, then just try to tolerate the pain."

Fearing such a statement, the *gopīs* said, "O cheater, no one except a merciless person like You would reject gentle ladies, who of their own accord, have come to see Him at night."

Another meaning: "O mad man (*kitava*), What young man would reject young women who come to see him in the middle of the night? Thus though You are a cheater (*kitava*), You have been cheated (of enjoyment)." According to the *Medinī* dictionary, the word *kitava* can refer to a cheater, a mad man or a thorn apple.

|| 10.31.17 ||

rahasi saṁvidaṁ hṛc-chayodayaṁ prahasitānanaṁ prema-vīkṣaṇam

bṛhad-uraḥ śriyo vīkṣya dhāma te muhur ati-spṛhā muhyate manaḥ

TRANSLATION

Our minds are repeatedly bewildered as we think of the intimate conversations we had with You in secret, feel the rise of lust in our hearts and remember Your smiling face, Your loving glances and Your broad chest, the resting place of the goddess of fortune. Thus we experience the most severe hankering for You.

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs* said, “What can be done? With five elements of illusion, like the five arrows of Cupid, You have entered through our eyes and ignited a blazing fire in our hearts. First, there are Your prayerful petitions for conjugal pleasure. Second, there is the rise of passion in us caused by Your glances. Third, there is Your smiling face. Fourth, there is Your loving glances, and fifth is Your broad chest endowed with all splendor. Considering all of this again and again, our hankering increases, our minds become completely bewildered and out of great eagerness we faint.”

|| 10.31.18 ||

vraja-vanaukasāṁ vyaktir aṅga te vṛjina-hantry alaṁ viśva-maṅgalam

tyaja manāk ca nas tvat-spṛhātmanāṁ sva-jana-hṛd-rujāṁ yan niṣūdanam

TRANSLATION

O beloved, Your all-auspicious appearance vanquishes the distress of those living in Vraja’s forests. Our minds long for Your association. Please give to us just a bit of that medicine, which counteracts the disease in Your devotees’ hearts.

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs* said, “Furthermore, Your intention in regard to us innocent, respectable girls, whom You have entranced and drawn into the forest in the middle of the night, is not simply to burn us to death in the fire of anxious expectation, but rather to save our lives by giving us Your intimate association.”

In this verse the *gopīs* give the reasoning behind the statement above. “Your auspicious appearance is for all the residents of Vraja without discrimination and it removes all distress. Therefore, for the sake of us, whose minds are hankering to fulfill that desire which arose in You on seeing us, You should give a little of that something to us without being miserly.”

Kṛṣṇa: “What thing is that?”

Gopīs: “It is the medicinal lotus flower of Your feet which pacifies the heart diseases of Your devotees (*sva jana hṛd rujāṁ*). If You can apply that medicine on our breasts, we can save our lives by fulfilling Your desire.”

|| 10.31.19 ||

yat te sujāta-caraṇāmburuhaṁ staneṣu

bhītāḥ śanaiḥ priya dadhīmahi karkaśeṣu

tenāṭavīm aṭasi tad vyathate na kiṁ svit

kūrpādibhir bhramati dhīr bhavad-āyuṣāṁ naḥ

TRANSLATION

O dearly beloved! Your lotus feet are so soft that we place them gently on our breasts, fearing that Your feet will be hurt. Our life rests only in You. Our minds, therefore, are filled with anxiety that Your tender feet might be wounded by pebbles as You roam about on the forest path.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa replied, “O women experienced in love! Those feet for which you have prayed are now absorbed in the pleasure of wandering about the forest. Therefore there is no chance that they can be placed on your breasts.”

The *gopīs* tearfully spoke this verse in reply. “Those extremely tender (*sujātaim: ati-kumāram*) lotus feet, which we hesitate to place upon our breasts for fear of injuring them, are wandering about in the forest.” With pitiful words, they express this feeling, “Alas, alas, what an improper and rashly unfair thing to do!”

Kṛṣṇa: “Why are you girls afraid?”

Gopīs: “Our reason for fear is the hardness of our breasts.”

Kṛṣṇa: “Then why do you hold My feet on them?”

Gopīs: “O dear one (*he priya*)! We hold them because we see that You gain satisfaction when Your feet are held on our breasts. Seeing that You derive pleasure from pressing Your feet on our breasts, we accept that, but we experience grief imagining that Your tender feet are feeling pain. Therefore, we will hold them very carefully (*śanaiḥ dadhīmahi*).”

The *gopīs*’ feeling of grief in fearful anticipation of the beloved’s distress, even in the midst of a mood of intimacy, is a symptom of *mahā-bhāva*. Due to this feeling, the *gopīs* implicitly speak. “Though we are Your friends, we are troubled because of the fear of hurting You. In other words, even in meeting with You, we have the misfortune of suffering. What is to be done now? If we perform severe austerities while praying to the creator to make our breasts softer, that will undo Your happiness. But since our breasts are hard, Your feet feel pain. All right, let us suffer difficulty in this way in both meeting and separation.”

“Though You are independent, how do You tolerate such difficulties? What is the purpose in wandering in the forest? Are Your feet equipped for wandering from forest to forest?” In this way the *gopīs* scold Kṛṣṇa.

Kṛṣṇa: “I will do whatever is on My mind. What business is this of yours?”

Gopīs: “Do Your feet not hurt? Certainly they must, but just as You are merciless to us, so You are also merciless to Your own body. Do You endure the pain with the intention of making us suffer, knowing that if You suffer we suffer? Or do You regard Your pain as bliss, since You get bliss from seeing us suffer? Or according to the principle that association breeds either good or bad qualities, originally Your heart was very soft, but by contacting our hard breasts You have now become hard-hearted. In the same way Your tender feet have become hard by associating with our breasts, so they should not feel any pain from the stones and spikes of dry grass. Or have all the stones and other hard objects become soft by contact with Your glorious feet?”

“Or is mother earth, being merciful or out of greed to taste Your sweetness, holding her tongue out as a resting place wherever Your feet fall? Or else maybe by chance You have fallen into the ocean of love for us, as we have for You, and gone mad due to separation

from us, and therefore cannot feel the pain in Your feet? Thinking of so many causes, our intelligence has become confused and we cannot conclude anything."

Kṛṣṇa: "That suffering which you display is suffering in name only. I don't consider that suffering real suffering since you are still alive."

Gopīs: "Our lives are only in You, for our life is You (*bhavad āyuṣāṁ*). As long as You are comfortable, then even if we have to suffer this much tribulation, we will remain alive. The idea behind this is that just like You, the creator is engaged in trying to make us miserable, and he is reasoning as follows: 'If I leave their life-spans with themselves, their life spans will burn up in the blazing torment of conjugal attraction and they will immediately die. Then who could I give suffering to? Therefore I will place their life-spans in the care of my like minded friend Kṛṣṇa, so they will remain alive and I will be free to continue making them suffer.' Because of this arrangement we are not dying."

There is another way of understanding the phrase *bhavad āyuṣāṁ*: "Our intelligence cannot determine anything and is becoming bewildered, for it is certain that our life airs are now leaving our bodies while You stand and watch."

Kṛṣṇa: "How can you die when your life span is intact?"

Gopīs: "The durations of our lives have now been offered to You (*bhavad āyuṣāṁ*). May You use them to enjoy playing in Vraja for a long time."

Thus ends the commentary on the Thirty first Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Thirty-two

The Reunion

|| 10.32.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

iti gopyaḥ pragāyantyaḥ pralapantyaś ca citradhā

ruruduḥ su-svaraṁ rājan kṛṣṇa-darśana-lālasāḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O King, having thus sung and spoken their hearts out in various charming ways, the gopīs began to weep loudly. They were very eager to see Lord Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

This chapter describes how Śrī Kṛṣṇa returned to His beloved *gopīs*. They worshiped Kṛṣṇa and He honored them in return, acknowledging that He was in debt to them.

Longing for Kṛṣṇa, the gopīs sang (*pragāyantyaḥ*) the most wonderful (*citradhā*) rhythms and tunes, and talked garrulously (*pralapantyaḥ*) due to impulse of love. Then they cried with sweet voices.

|| 10.32.2 ||

tāsām āvirabhūc chauriḥ smayamāna-mukhāmbujaḥ

pītāmbara-dharaḥ sragvī sākṣān manmatha-manmathaḥ

TRANSLATION

Then Lord Kṛṣṇa, a smile on His lotus face, appeared before the gopīs. Wearing a garland and a yellow garment, He directly appeared as one who can bewilder the mind of Cupid, who himself bewilders the minds of ordinary people.

COMMENTARY

The name "*chauriḥ*" (*śauriḥ*) is spoken by Śukadeva Gosvāmī out of jealousy toward Kṛṣṇa, since he, Śukadeva, is taking the side of the *gopīs*. The word *śauriḥ* indicates that Kṛṣṇa is a *kṣatriya*. Because Kṛṣṇa took His birth among the royal order [Vasudeva is a *kṣatriya*], who are hardhearted by nature, He displayed that characteristic by giving sorrow to the *gopīs*, who possessed pure love for Him. If Kṛṣṇa had taken birth in the cowherd community, whose hearts are soft and honest, He would not have acted like this. This is the hint Śukadeva Gosvāmī gives by using the word *chauri* or *śauriḥ*.

Kṛṣṇa was broadly smiling (*smayamāna*) even while the *gopīs* were suffering. Actually, however, Kṛṣṇa is smiling just to give them pleasure. Although Kṛṣṇa's lotus face (*mukhāmbujaḥ*) blossomed with a smile, the suffering of the *gopīs* pained His lotus heart.

Kṛṣṇa appeared before the *gopīs* with a yellow shawl (*pītāmbara*) draped across His shoulders and hanging down on both sides of His chest. Folding His hands, Kṛṣṇa begged them for forgiveness. He wore a garland to show the *gopīs* what Rādhā had given Him.

Sākṣān manmatha-manmathaḥ means that Kṛṣṇa was directly Cupid. Even though Cupid bewilders the whole world, when he came to bewilder Kṛṣṇa by taking the form of a woman, Cupid himself became struck by his own arrows of love and fainted in bewilderment upon seeing the enchanting beauty of Kṛṣṇa. By this we understand that when Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* enjoy together, they are being struck by the arrows of that Cupid emanating from Kṛṣṇa Himself.

The *gopīs* were not impelled by the arrows of the mundane Cupid, who bewilders the entire world, because he has no domain in their transcendental affairs. We should also understand that when Kṛṣṇa appeared before the gopīs, He took this particular form of the bewilderer of Cupid (*manmatha-manmathaḥ*) revealing His own enchanting sweetness, in order to make the *gopīs* forget their intense sorrow of separation from Him.

|| 10.32.3 ||

taṁ vilokyāgataṁ preṣṭhaṁ prīty-utphulla-dṛśo 'balāḥ

uttasthur yugapat sarvās tanvaḥ prāṇam ivāgatam

TRANSLATION

When the gopīs saw that their dearmost Kṛṣṇa had returned to them, they all stood up at once, and out of their affection for Him their eyes bloomed wide. It was as if the air of life had reentered their bodies.

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs*' life airs returned (*āgataṁ*) to their hands, feet (*tanvaḥ*) and other limbs, and then they stood up on seeing Kṛṣṇa return (*āgataṁ*). The word *āgataṁ* is repeated to make it clear that the swooning gopīs recovered only because of Kṛṣṇa's return.

|| 10.32.4 ||

kācit karāmbujaṁ śaurer jagṛhe 'ñjalinā mudā

kācid dadhāra tad-bāhum aṁse candana-bhūṣitam

TRANSLATION

One gopī joyfully took Kṛṣṇa's hand between her folded palms, and another placed His arm, anointed with sandalwood paste, on her shoulder.

COMMENTARY

The next five verses (4-8) describe the personal expressions of ecstatic love of some of the principal gopīs.

“His lotus hand” (*kara-ambujaṁ*) means in particular Kṛṣṇa’s right hand, as will be made clear in the second half of the verse. “She seized” (*jagṛhe*) implies that she did this out of explicit eagerness to touch Kṛṣṇa, based on her shy affection for Him. Since this gopī touched Kṛṣṇa with reverence, it can be understood that she belonged to the submissive (*dakṣiṇa*) “right-wing” group of gopīs, fully subservient (*parādhīnā*) to Kṛṣṇa. Such a *gopī* has a kind of affection which is called *ghṛta sneha* (ghee-like), thinking herself as belonging to Kṛṣṇa with reverence. Because she is mentioned first, it may be concluded that she was the senior most of that group, namely Candrāvalī.

The other *gopī* put Kṛṣṇa’s other hand, decorated with sandalwood paste, on her shoulder. That would be Kṛṣṇa’s left hand, since it is fitting that she should stand on the left side of her lover. Since this gopī is taking it upon herself to embrace Kṛṣṇa while still retaining a semblance of reverence, she displays the kind of affection known as *madhu-sneha* (honey-like) possessiveness mixed somewhat with *ghṛta sneha* (ghee-like) reverence. Thus she acted independently, as if her lover were under her control, and yet remained submissive (*dakṣiṇa*) at the same time by standing on Kṛṣṇa’s left side. That *gopī* was Śyamā, a *suhṛt-pakṣa sakhī* (group friends of Rādhā).

|| 10.32.5 ||

kācid añjalināgṛhṇāt tanvī tāmbūla-carvitam

ekā tad-aṅghri-kamalaṁ santaptā stanayor adhāt

TRANSLATION

A slender gopī respectfully took in her joined hands the betel nut He had chewed, and another gopī, burning with desire, put His lotus feet on her breasts.

COMMENTARY

One gopī took Kṛṣṇa’s chewed betel-nut (*tāmbūla-carvitam*) in her joined palms. She was a member of the “right-wing” (*dakṣiṇa*) group, considering herself subservient to her lover, but having a friendship with Kṛṣṇa based mainly in the mood of servitude (*dāsya-bhāva*). Another *gopī*, sitting on the ground, took Kṛṣṇa’s right lotus foot in her hands and placed it on her breast. Kṛṣṇa supported Himself with His left arm resting on the shoulder of a *gopī*, and His left foot fixed on the ground. The seated *gopī* was in a mood of servitude (*dāsya-bhāva*) predominated by friendship.

She also considered herself subservient to her lover and was “right-wing.” Both *gopīs* had *ghṛta-sneha*, reverential affection, thinking of themselves as belonging to Kṛṣṇa, as they were the chief sakhīs of Candrāvalī, namely Padmā and Śaibyā.

|| 10.32.6 ||

ekā bhru-kuṭim ābadhya prema-saṁrambha-vihvalā

ghnantīvaikṣat kaṭākṣepaiḥ sandaṣṭa-daśana-cchadā

TRANSLATION

One gopī, beside herself with loving anger, bit her lips and stared at Him with frowning eyebrows, as if to wound Him with her harsh glances.

COMMENTARY

One *gopī*, overwhelmed with the depth of Her love, arched her eyebrows like a full-drawn bow and out of Her affectionate anger struck Kṛṣṇa with the arrows of Her sidelong glances.

"O crest-jewel of deceivers! You have given Me the *hālahala* poison of pure love for You, and it has had its full effect. Now that My life airs are about to leave my body, why are You again approaching Me to burn them even more? I can understand very well who You are." This was the mood She revealed while glancing at Kṛṣṇa.

She also bit Her lower lip while hiding them with Her hands as an expression of Her anger. This *gopī* showed jealousy (*māna*), arising from Her *madhu-sneha* (honey-like love), which is the affectionate mood of possessing Kṛṣṇa and thinking of Kṛṣṇa as Hers. This *gopī* exhibited *vāmya-svabhāve*, a quarrelsome and crooked nature full of contrariness, which is characteristic of "left-wing" (*vāmya*) *gopīs*. This *gopī* is none other than Śrīmati Rādhikā.

|| 10.32.7 ||

aparānimiṣad-dṛgbhyāṁ juṣāṇā tan-mukhāmbujam

āpītam api nātṛpyat santas tac-caraṇaṁ yathā

TRANSLATION

Another gopī looked with unblinking eyes upon His lotus face, but even after deeply relishing its sweetness She did not feel satiated, just as mystic saints are never satiated when meditating upon the Lord's feet.

COMMENTARY

One *gopī* gazed at Kṛṣṇa with unblinking eyes, due to being stunned with bliss. Her eyes were like maddened bees eager to taste the honey of Kṛṣṇa's lotus face. Though repeatedly relishing that nectar, they were still not satisfied.

This verse can be interpreted in another way: Because of the angry glance of Rādhā mentioned in the previous verse, Kṛṣṇa's face was trembling with fear and remorse. Therefore that *gopī* could not be satisfied, though constantly drinking the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's face with her two eyes. Although the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's face was drunk and its sweetness fully relished, the natural sweetness of His lotus face increased without limit. Nevertheless because of being struck with the arrow glances of the leader of her group (Rādhā), the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa's face then increased manifold, being mixed with the *saṇcāri-bhāvas* of Her fear, despair, humility, shyness and so forth. Thus this *gopī's* thirst became even greater and she could not be satiated.

For lack of any proper analogy, a partially applicable analogy is spoken by the words beginning *santaḥ* (saints). Just as devotees situated in the *dāsya* and *sakhya-bhāvas* (mood of loving servitude and friendship), continually serve Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, still they cannot be completely satisfied, so this *gopī* also could not be satisfied.

It should be understood that Kṛṣṇa is giving His full glance and attention only to that *gopī* (Rādhā) who was glaring at Him with furrowed brows, and did not divert Himself to any one else at all. Seeing Kṛṣṇa was inattentive to herself, the *gopī* mentioned in verse seven, Lalitā-sakhī, did not become ashamed, but rather continued looking at Kṛṣṇa willfully with fully opened eyes.

It should be understood from this that the *gopī* (Rādhā, verse six), who was pouring down upon Kṛṣṇa the arrows of Her sidelong glances, is the most fortunate of all the *gopīs*.

|| 10.32.8 ||

taṁ kācin netra-randhreṇa hṛdi kṛtvā nimīlya ca

pulakāṅgy upaguhyāste yogīvānanda-samplutā

TRANSLATION

One gopī took the Lord through the aperture of her eyes and placed Him within her heart. Then, with her eyes closed and her bodily hairs standing on end, she continuously embraced Him within. Thus immersed in transcendental ecstasy, she resembled a yogī meditating upon the Lord.

COMMENTARY

Hṛdi-kṛtvā means "leading into her heart," which indicates this *gopī* was thinking, "May this fickle lover, Kṛṣṇa, whom I have found by great fortune, not leave me again." Thinking Kṛṣṇa would escape through her eye holes, she closed her eyes. Her body then erupted in goose bumps of ecstasy because of the unobstructed enjoyment of union with Kṛṣṇa. She stood there in a pose of embracing Kṛṣṇa to her breasts with her arms. All her gravity was lost due to the intense hankering she felt now that the period of intense separation was over. Her shyness also failed to manifest due to the absence of any outsider's curious gaze.

The three *gopīs* mentioned in verses six, seven and eight, because they did not go to the side of their beloved, are understood to be of the uncooperative type (*vāma*, "left-wing *gopīs*.") They thought, "Kṛṣṇa should come to us, we should not go to Him." This mentality shows that these three *gopīs* are full of possessiveness (*madiyata-bhāva*) toward Kṛṣṇa, and this quality transforms their affection into *madhu-sneha* "honey-like affection" for Kṛṣṇa. Because these *gopīs* think, "Kṛṣṇa belongs to me," they are very intimate companions of Kṛṣṇa who have fully brought their lover under their control. Among these three, Śrī Rādhā, the leader of all the *gopīs*, is mentioned in verse six. Verses seven and eight describe Rādhā's principal sakhīs, Lalitā and Viśākhā.

The Śrī Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī says the gopīs mentioned in verses 4-8 are Candrāvalī, Śyāmalā (v.4), Padmā, Śaibyā (v.5), Śrī Rādhā (v.6), Lalitā (v.7) and Viśākhā (v.8). The eighth is understood to be Bhadrā as mentioned in the *Viṣṇu Pūrāna*:

> *kācid āyantam alokya, govindam aii-harṣitā*
>
> *kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇeti kṛṣṇeti, prāha nānyad udairayat*.

> "One *gopī* looking at Govinda became extremely joyful and began to repeatedly sing His name, "Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa!" She could say nothing else."

Śrī Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī itself quotes a verse from the Skanda Purāṇa (*Dvārakā-māhātmya* section of the *Prahlāda-saṁhitā*) that declares these eight *gopīs* to be the principal among the three billion *gopīs*. Detailed information about the hierarchy of *gopīs* is available in Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi*.

The *Padma Purāṇa* confirms that Śrī Rādhā is the foremost of the *gopīs*:

yathā rādhā priyā viṣṇos tasyāḥ kuṇḍaṁ priyaṁ tathā

sarva-gopīṣu saivaikā viṣṇor atyanta-vallabhā

"Just as Rādhā is most dear to Kṛṣṇa, so also is Her *kuṇḍa* (Radha-kuṇḍa). Of all the *gopīs*, Rādhā is the most beloved of Kṛṣṇa."

The *Bṛhad-gautamīya-tantra* also names Rādhikā as Kṛṣṇa's foremost consort:

devī kṛṣṇa-mayī proktā rādhikā para-devatā

sarva-lakṣmī-mayī sarva kāntiḥ sammohinī parā

"Śrī Rādhā is the most beautiful, supremely worshipable goddess. Rādhā is always totally absorbed in Kṛṣṇa. Rādhā is the central figure for all the goddesses of fortune. Rādhā fulfills all of Kṛṣṇa's desires, and completely enchants His mind. Rādhā is the inseparable internal potency of Kṛṣṇa."

The *Ṛg-parisiṣta* (a supplement to the *Ṛg Veda*) says: *rādhayā mādhavo devo mādhavenaiva rādhikā vibhrājante janeṣu* "Mādhava together with Rādhā, and Rādhikā together with Mādhava are the most radiantly attractive persons in the whole universe."

|| 10.32.9 ||

sarvās tāḥ keśavāloka-paramotsava-nirvṛtāḥ

jahur viraha-jaṁ tāpaṁ prājñaṁ prāpya yathā janāḥ

TRANSLATION

All the gopīs enjoyed the greatest festivity when they saw their beloved Keśava again. They gave up the distress of separation, just as people in general forget their misery when they gain the association of a spiritually enlightened person.

COMMENTARY

As people (*janāḥ*) who are suffering the pains of material existence give up suffering on meeting a topmost devotee (*prājñaṁ*), so the *gopīs* got released from their suffering by seeing Kṛṣṇa. This is similar to the *Bhāgavatam's* description of the rainy season: *gṛheṣu tapta-nirviṇṇā yathācyuta-janāgame*, "Those feeling the distress of household life become blissful when the Lord's topmost devotees visit them." (SB 10.20.20)

|| 10.32.10 ||

tābhir vidhūta-śokābhir bhagavān acyuto vṛtaḥ

vyarocatādhikaṁ tāta puruṣaḥ śaktibhir yathā

TRANSLATION

Encircled by the gopīs, who were now relieved of all distress, Lord Acyuta, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, shone forth splendidly. My dear King, Kṛṣṇa thus appeared like the Supersoul encircled by His spiritual potencies.

COMMENTARY

Śaktibhiḥ means with the potencies of all the senses. A person attains splendor when endowed with the power of all his senses, and appears miserable if there is a disorder of his senses. In the same way, when the *gopīs* were distressed, Kṛṣṇa Himself also felt distressed and did not shine forth so much. But when the *gopīs* were relieved of all their unhappiness of separation and felt renewed attraction to Him, Kṛṣṇa looked even more beautiful than ever. Just as a person experiences pleasure when his own senses feel pleasure and feels distress when his own senses feel distress, similarly, Kṛṣṇa feels happy when the *gopīs* are happy and sad when they are sad. This establishes the truth that Kṛṣṇa had pure transcendental love for the *gopīs*, and that they were direct emanations from Kṛṣṇa's personal form (*svarūpa-bhūta*).

This point is described in the Prabhāsa-khaṇda of the Skanda Purāṇa: "There were sixteen-thousand *gopīs* assembled at the *rāsa* dance. In their midst, like the best of swans, was the Paramātma, Janardana Kṛṣṇa. O Pārvati-devī! These *gopīs* are glorified as the sixteen *śaktīs*, personal potencies of Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is compared to the moon and these sixteen principal *gopīs* are His phases. When they come together they are like a garland of the sixteen phases of the moon. These sixteen parts are each further divided into sixteen more *gopīs*, each existing with separate bodies and emotions."

The *Āgamas* say: "At the *rāsa maṇḍala*, Kṛṣṇa appeared most splendid surrounded by three billion beautiful *gopīs*." Among them sixteen thousand were prominent. Of those,

one thousand were more prominent. Out of these one thousand, eight *gopīs* were the most principal, and among these eight, two, namely Rādhā and Candrāvalī, were by far the best. Of these two, Śrī Rādhā is the most superexcellent. This is the conclusion of the devotional scriptures.

|| 10.32.11-12 ||

tāḥ samādāya kālindyā nirviśya pulinaṁ vibhuḥ

vikasat-kunda-mandāra surabhy-anila-ṣaṭpadam

śarac-candrāṁśu-sandoha-dhvasta-doṣā-tamaḥ śivam

kṛṣṇāyā hasta-taralā cita-komala-vālukam

TRANSLATION

The almighty Lord then took the gopīs with Him to the bank of the Kālindī, who with the hands of her waves had scattered piles of soft sand upon the shore. In that auspicious place the breeze, bearing the fragrance of blooming kunda and mandāra flowers, attracted many bees, and the abundant rays of the autumn moon dispelled the darkness of night.

COMMENTARY

Holding the hands of the *gopīs* and laughing, Kṛṣṇa looked especially wonderful as He approached the bank of the Yamunā. The splendor of the riverbank is described in one and a half verses. The breeze along the Yamunā's bank was fragrant with blossoming *kunda* and *mandāra* flowers. We can infer that the wind, coming off the river, was cool and it was also gentle because bees were circling within it. The abundant rays of the autumn full moon dispelled the darkness. The river bank was most auspicious and gave great pleasure (*śivam*). With the hands of her waves Yamunā-devī had spread out soft sand for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.32.13 ||

tad-darśanāhlāda-vidhūta-hṛd-rujo manorathāntaṁ śrutayo yathā yayuḥ

svair uttarīyaiḥ kuca-kuṅkumāṅkitair acīkÿpann āsanam ātma-bandhave

TRANSLATION

Their heartache vanquished by the ecstasy of seeing Kṛṣṇa, the gopīs, like the personified Vedas before them, felt their desires completely fulfilled. For their

dear friend Kṛṣṇa they arranged a seat with their shawls which were smeared with the kuṅkuma powder from their breasts.

COMMENTARY

This verse describes the *gopīs*' services rendered to Kṛṣṇa in pure love befitting their attitude of intimate friendship (*ātma-bandhave*). All the distress in the minds the young girls of Vraja was removed by the ecstasy of seeing Kṛṣṇa. They arranged a seat for their dear friend by using their shawls, which were sprinkled with the *kuṅkuma* from their breasts. The *śrutis* attained the highest platform of desire fulfillment (*mano-rathāntaṁ*). Upon seeing Kṛṣṇa enjoying with the *gopīs*, the *śrutis* thought, "When will we become Vraja-gopīs, and offer the *kunkuma* tinged shawls from our breasts as seats for Kṛṣṇa?" The *Bṛhad-Vāmana Purāṇa* says the śrutis, following in the footsteps of the *gopīs*, executed severe austerities in order to attain bodies of gopīs.

Therefore the *śrutis*, or personified Vedas, prayed in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.87.23) as follows:

> *striya uragendra-bhoga-bhuja-daṇḍa-viṣakta-dhiyo*
>
> *vayam api te samāḥ sama-dṛśo 'ṅghri-saroja-sudhāḥ*
>
> "The women of Vraja attained the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet after having their intelligence vanquished by the sharp poison of His beautiful serpentine arms. By following in their footsteps, we too will become *gopīs* and serve Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet."

The *śrutis* had seen Kṛṣṇa during His appearance in the previous day of Brahmā and had become full of the most intense desire to associate with Him. Then in this *kalpa* they became *gopīs*. Since the *Vedas* are eternal in human society, the *srutis* in this *kalpa* also become full of desire for Kṛṣṇa and in the next *kalpa* they too will become *gopīs*.

|| 10.32.14 ||

tatropaviṣṭo bhagavān sa īśvaro yogeśvarāntar-hṛdi kalpitāsanaḥ

cakāsa gopī-pariṣad-gato 'rcitas trailokya-lakṣmy-eka-padaṁ vapur dadhat

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, for whom the great masters of mystic meditation arrange a seat within their hearts, took His seat in the assembly of gopīs. His transcendental body, the exclusive abode of beauty and opulence within the three worlds, shone brilliantly as the gopīs worshiped Him.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa sat upon the various seats laid out by the successive groups of *gopīs*. But, it may be questioned, how could Kṛṣṇa sit upon so many seats with only one body? Because Kṛṣṇa is the controller (*īśvara*), He expanded His form into many without anyone noticing, in order to fulfill His desires (*bhagavān*). The word *bhaga* means desire (*kāma*) as well as wealth and glory according to the *Amara-kośa* dictionary. Therefore, here the word *bhagavān* means *kāmavān*, one who possesses desires. As soon as Kṛṣṇa's *aiśvarya-śakti* (*īśvara*) noted His desire to sit on all the seats, these forms were manifested by His *yogamāyā* potency.

The indestructible, most valued sitting place of the Lord which is difficult to attain by anyone in the three worlds is established deep in the hearts of the masters of mystic meditation like Śiva and Ananta Śeṣa. The Vraja-gopīs, however, having conquered the Lord by their intense, selfless love, arranged a seat for Kṛṣṇa outside of their hearts with their own garments, which were fragrant with the perfumes they had used. Kṛṣṇa accepted those seats and appeared most resplendent (*cakāsa*) as He sat on them. He who is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and whom even such personal associates as Brahmā and Śiva must approach with prayers at the shore of the Milk Ocean, whereupon He mystically appears within their minds for a single moment, has now become the personal associate of the *gopīs* (*gopī pariṣad gata*).

The word *arcitas* means that Kṛṣṇa was honored by presentations of betel nut, joking words, smiles and sidelong glances. In some cases the word *arcitas* (worshiped) is replaced by the word *acyuta*, which means that Kṛṣṇa sat there for a long time accepting worship.

Why did Kṛṣṇa appear among the *gopīs*? He whose transcendental body (*vapuḥ*) is the exclusive (*ekaṁ*) reservoir (*padaṁ*) of the manifold opulences of beauty (*laksmī*), wealth, power and fame, which are found in His own infinite expansions throughout the lower, middle and upper regions (*trai-lokya*) of the material and spiritual worlds was nourished by immersing in the sweet ocean of the *gopīs*' radiant beauty, soft smiles and sidelong glances.

Another meaning: From the very moment Kṛṣṇa sat shining amongst the *gopīs* on the bank of the Yamunā, the masters of mystic *yoga* like Lord Śiva brought Kṛṣṇa into their own hearts by meditation (*yogeśvarāntar-hrdi kalpitāsanaḥ*), characterized by Kṛṣṇa

appearing beautifully in the midst of the *gopīs* and exhibiting various talks and joking gestures.

|| 10.32.15 ||

sabhājayitvā tam anaṅga-dīpanaṁ sahāsa-līlekṣaṇa-vibhrama-bhruvā

saṁsparśanenāṅka-kṛtāṅghri-hastayoḥ saṁstutya īṣat kupitā babhāṣire

TRANSLATION

Śrī Kṛṣṇa had awakened romantic desires within the gopīs, and they honored Him by glancing at Him with playful smiles, gesturing amorously with their eyebrows, and massaging His hands and feet as they held them in their laps. Even while worshiping Him, however, they felt somewhat angry, and thus they addressed Him as follows.

COMMENTARY

This verse describes the actions of *gopīs* who did not want to submit to Kṛṣṇa's advances for conjugal love. Glancing with explicit movements of their eyebrows expressing their individual feelings, the *gopīs* honored Kṛṣṇa, who incites lust (*anaṅga-dīpanam*) within them. *Sabhājayitvā* means that the *gopīs* were honoring Kṛṣṇa with appropriate emotions in order to conceal their affectionate anger, thinking, "Previously Kṛṣṇa abandoned us, and now He has come for His own enjoyment." To hide their anger they began to praise Kṛṣṇa while taking His feet and hands in their laps. *Āṅka-kṛtā* can also indicate that the *gopīs* placed their hands and feet on Kṛṣṇa's lap.

Pleased with the touch of Kṛṣṇa's hands and feet, the *gopīs* praised Him: "Ah! Your feet and hands are extraordinarily cool. Having relieved us of the painful fire of separation, You are truly the pleasing moon, who knows no distress or sorrow." After praising Kṛṣṇa with such sarcastic words, the *gopīs* became slightly angry. Even though their anger had somewhat reduced due the ecstasy of seeing Kṛṣṇa, still a trace remained in their minds. In this mental state they began to speak.

|| 10.32.16 ||

śrī-gopya ūcuḥ

bhajato 'nubhajanty eka eka etad-viparyayam

nobhayāṁś ca bhajanty eka etan no brūhi sādhu bhoḥ

TRANSLATION

The gopīs said: Some people reciprocate the affection only of those who are affectionate toward them, while others show affection even to those who are indifferent or inimical. And yet others will not show affection toward anyone. Dear Kṛṣṇa, please properly explain this matter to us.

COMMENTARY

Each of the *gopīs* personally considered within her mind, “Since Kṛṣṇa has put us, who are the crest-jewel of all His loving devotees, into such an unfortunate condition we should ask Him why He did it.”

Other *gopīs* thought, “O Kṛṣṇa, do you have love for us, indifference to us, or enmity towards us? Even though there are these three possibilities, we cannot ascertain which is the fact. Moreover, is Your love conditional or unconditional? It cannot be conditional, because the person with conditional love gratifies those who help him fulfill his desires, and therefore does not neglect them or subject them to misery. You however, have tried to kill us by burning us in the fire of separation from You.”

“And neither is Your love unconditional, since You abandoned us in the dense, fearful forest in the middle of the night. Though seeing our suffering, You were not at all bereaved. In that we see some motive, so it cannot be unconditional. We can also understand that You are not indifferent to us, because we see that You try to make us both happy and sad. Neither is it enmity, which would have to be either permanent dislike or enmity in a particular connection with some unfavorable reciprocation. It is not permanent dislike, because we don’t see it in You. Neither is it from unfavorable actions, because we have done nothing inimical toward You.”

“Rather, You serve as the example of a person who has that sort of perverted enmity symptomized by the vicious desire to harm those who trust one. We should not state this openly with our own mouths, but we will ask such questions in the form of riddles, so that Kṛṣṇa Himself will give the appropriate answer, and thus the truth of this matter will become evident.”

Because the *gopīs* were feeling the same sentiment within each of their hearts, they all reflected in a similar way. Then these *gopīs* of similar mind spoke: “O most intelligent one, O Kṛṣṇa, please answer this riddle of ours. There are some people who only respect those who respect them. Their respect is conditional. They give respect expecting something, and if they do not get that, then they no longer give respect. This is

conditional love. Quite to the contrary of this, there are those who give respect to those who do not respect them. They have unconditional respect. Not expecting any results for themselves, they have unconditional love."

"The third type of people are those who do not respect anyone, whether that person respects them or not. There is no question of conditional or unconditional love here. Those persons are indifferent. Hatred and enmity are also non-reciprocation, so persons who are hateful and inimical also fall in the category of non-respect."

Though not clearly mentioned here, it will become somewhat evident in Kṛṣṇa's answers. The *gopīs* said, "Kṛṣṇa, Please say something to explain this matter as to who reciprocates with whom and who fails to do so? You should answer correctly (*sādhu*) without deviating from the subject."

|| 10.32.17 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

mitho bhajanti ye sakhyaḥ svārthaikāntodyamā hi te

na tatra sauhṛdaṁ dharmaḥ svārthārthaṁ tad dhi nānyathā

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: So-called friends who show affection for each other only to benefit themselves are actually selfish. They have no true friendship, nor are they following the true principles of religion. Indeed, if they did not expect benefit for themselves, they would not reciprocate.

COMMENTARY

Understanding the intention of the *gopīs*, Kṛṣṇa answered. "Those who reciprocate with one another based on expectation of return for their assistance are endeavoring exclusively for the sake of their own rewards in the present and future. They are indeed worshiping only themselves and no one else. Their mutual reciprocation would not occur otherwise. They are selfish persons with conditional love, and are full of lusty desires. Consequently these people have no love (*sauhṛdam:prema*). Nor do they have any *dharma* (faultless religiousness)."

|| 10.32.18 ||

bhajanty abhajato ye vai karuṇāḥ pitarau yathā

dharmo nirapavādo 'tra sauhṛdaṁ ca su-madhyamāḥ

TRANSLATION

My dear slender-waisted gopīs, some people are genuinely merciful or, like parents, naturally affectionate. Such persons, who devotedly serve even those who fail to reciprocate with them, are following the true, faultless path of religion, and they are true well-wishers.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa here answers the second question. "Those who honor those who do not honor them are showing unconditional respect. They are of two categories: those with family relationship, such as the father and mother, and those who are merciful by nature. Specifically, the "merciful" are the pure devotees like Prahlāda Mahārāja who manifest unconditional mercy. Both these types are not concerned with personal gain. Whether they are happy or miserable, they continue to reciprocate with the other person, and even after death they do not give up their respect. Among these the pure devotees are the best, and the mother and father are second class. The religiousness (*dharma*) of both these classes is faultless (*nirapavādaḥ*), because it is free from expectation of material results. Their undying friendship and pure love (*sauhṛda:prema*) is also faultless.

"O slender-waisted ones (*su-madhyamāḥ*)!" The word *su-madhyamāḥ* implies indirectly that the middle (*madhyama*) question of the *gopīs* is the most excellent (*su*). Because they apply to dishonorable examples, the first and last questions are not as respectable." Or it can mean, "This middle answer actually is directed towards you *gopīs*, who are the personification of the middle question's answer."

|| 10.32.19 ||

bhajato 'pi na vai kecid bhajanty abhajataḥ kutaḥ

ātmārāmā hy āpta-kāmā akṛta-jñā guru-druhaḥ

TRANSLATION

Then there are those individuals who are spiritually self-satisfied, materially fulfilled or by nature ungrateful or simply envious of superiors. Such persons will not love even those who love them, what to speak of those who are inimical.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa answers the third question of the *gopīs* in this verse.

"Since some persons do not respect or respond to those who respect them, what is the question of respecting those who do not respect them? There are of four types, mentioned in sequence from greater to lesser. The first is the *ātmārāmā*, who delights in the self alone and forever looks within. The second type is the *āpta-kāmā*, who though seeing externally, has satisfied all his material desires, and therefore does not seek enjoyment from others. The third type is the ungrateful person (*akṛta-jñā*). Even though they desire sense gratification from others, they do not recognize when others help them."

The fourth type is the *guru-druhaḥ*, who is inimical to his superiors. He does not acknowledge what others have done for him, and rather shows excessive hatred towards them for no good reason. Those who have a reason for being inimical are called *alpa-druhaḥ*, a lower degree class of *guru-druhaḥ*. In addition, those who show hatred toward one who renders protection are *guru-druhaḥ*, and those who injure one who is faithful are *guru-druhaḥ*. These three types of *guru-druhi* are those who do not respect others.

In this way, we have had one example (the selfish person) for first question, two examples (Prahlāda, the mother and father) for second, and six examples for the third, making a total of nine examples.

|| 10.32.20 ||

nāhaṁ tu sakhyo bhajato 'pi jantūn bhajāmy amīṣām anuvṛtti-vṛttaye

yathādhano labdha-dhane vinaṣṭe tac-cintayānyan nibhṛto na veda

TRANSLATION

But the reason I do not immediately reciprocate the affection of living beings even when they worship Me, O gopīs, is that I want to intensify their loving devotion. They then become like a poor man who has gained some wealth and then lost it, and who thus becomes so anxious about it that he can think of nothing else.

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs* said, "Kṛṣṇa, You are not among the examples given in Your answers to the first and second questions. For You are not a selfish materialist, not a merciful devotee,

nor a mother or father. Please tell us then which of the four types of *guru-druhi* You belong to?"

Kṛṣṇa answered, "You want to hear My defeat from My own mouth? O sakhīs, smiling and glancing at each other in glee! Please hear Me. In as much as I am Nārāyaṇa, I am self-satisfied (*ātmarāmā*) and full in all desires (*purna-kāma*), but as the son of Nanda, I am neither of these. As a simple cowherd boy, not having studied the *Nīti-sāstras*, I am *akṛta-jñā* (ignorant), but as Nārāyaṇa I am *kṛta-jñā*, all knowing and also grateful. I am *guru-drohi* for having hurt you by once abandoning you after having shown favor to you many times by enjoying pastimes with you. Nevertheless, I am not *guru-drohi*, for I gave you the ecstasy of seeing Me again."

Gopīs: "Then to which class do You belong?"

Kṛṣṇa: "To none of these (*nāham*)." Here the word tu (on the other hand) expresses the introduction of a contrary idea. "I do not respond to any living entity that respects or worships Me."

Gopīs: "But how is this different from the group (*guru-drohi*) You previously explained?"

Kṛṣṇa: "For those surrendered souls who worship Me through *nāma-kīrtana* and other means, I do not respond in order to make their worship more perfect. O *gopīs* (*abalā-gana*) who cannot understand My real intention! Not seeing Me, those surrendered souls develop deep humility, feeling, 'Alas, alas, everything I have done has been useless. Because I am an offender, Kṛṣṇa has not shown even the slightest favor toward me. Let me be damned!'"

"By constantly thinking in this way, those who have not yet developed mature love for Me will become free from lust and anger and awaken pure devotion full of power and brilliance. However, the nature of those who already have mature love (*kṛṣṇa-prema*) for Me is different. For them, I do not respond in order to increase their attachment to Me. I appear and then disappear, in order to deepen their loving attachment."

In this regard an analogy to those who already have *prema* is given by the words beginning *yathā*. When a poor man gains wealth and then loses it, he becomes filled (*nibhṛtah*) with thoughts of that wealth, and cannot think of anything else, such as eating and drinking. Those who have attained *prema*, and then lose the Lord react similar to this.

Kṛṣṇa: “In this way I am actually merciful. It is desirable for My worshipers to have this complete attachment to Me. Thus to increase that attachment more and more, I, even though externally failing to reciprocate with them, invisibly reciprocate very much with them.

“Although you *gopīs* are the ideal examples of those who worship even those who do not worship them, I too am actually very merciful, as much as you are, since I have given you the gift of My *darśana*. One should not think that only if I am present that I respond, and if I am absent I do not respond. For then My promise, *ye yathā māṁ prapadyante tāṁs tathaiva bhajāmy aham*, ‘I will respond accordingly as they worship Me’ (Bg. 4.11) would be broken.”

|| 10.32.21 ||

evaṁ mad-arthojjhita-loka-veda svānām hi vo mayy anuvṛttaye ’balāḥ

mayāparokṣaṁ bhajatā tirohitaṁ māsūyituṁ mārhatha tat priyaṁ priyāḥ

TRANSLATION

My dear girls, understanding that simply for My sake you had rejected the authority of worldly opinion, of the Vedas and of your relatives, I acted as I did only to increase your attachment to Me. Even when I removed Myself from your sight by suddenly disappearing, I never stopped loving you. Therefore, My beloved gopīs, please do not harbor any bad feelings toward Me, your beloved.

COMMENTARY

“It is true that You fully respond both to the devotees who have not achieved *prema* and to those have achieved *prema*. Now You have counted us among these ordinary living beings, since You are also acting in this manner with us.”

Anticipating these doubtful words of the *gopīs*, Kṛṣṇa said, “O dearly beloveds! The dust of your lotus feet is more dear to Me than countless millions of My own lives. Please forgive My wickedness for treating you like ordinary persons today.” This is the meaning of *evam*. Or *evam* can mean “in this way.”

“For My sake You gave up worldly (*loka*) opinion by ignoring what is proper and improper, and also the *Vedas* (*veda*) by ignoring what is religious and irreligious. In addition, you gave up your affection for relatives (*svānām*), wealth and friends to come

to Me. In order to increase your loving propensity (*anuvṛttaye*), I have responded to you invisibly as I do with My ordinary devotees. I disappeared from your sight with a desire to hear your love-filled lamentations."

With such pitiful exclamations of repentance Kṛṣṇa states that He has done a great injustice. Kṛṣṇa said, "Devotees such as you have never existed either in the past, present or in the future. There are no other devotees like you, whose attraction for Me is so great that it never decreases even by one atom. Please, therefore, forgive this injustice of Mine, which I did to show the other *premi-bhaktas* the great glory of your love in separation. Please forgive Me for My lack of consideration of you. You should not be inimical (*asūyitum*) or find fault with Me because I am dear (*priya*) to you. Certainly lovers do not take to heart the faults of their beloved (*priyam*)."

|| 10.32.22 ||

na pāraye 'haṁ niravadya-saṁyujāṁ sva-sādhu-kṛtyaṁ vibudhāyuṣāpi vaḥ

yā mābhajan durjara-geha-śṛṅkhalāḥ saṁvṛścya tad vaḥ pratiyātu sādhunā

TRANSLATION

I am not able to repay My debt for your spotless service, even within a lifetime of Brahmā. Your connection with Me is beyond reproach. You have worshiped Me, cutting off all domestic ties, which are difficult to break. Therefore please let your own glorious deeds be your compensation.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, "Now please hear what is going on in My mind. Your association with Me is faultless and unconditional (*niravadya-saṁyujām*). It does not depend on any condition of material desire (*kāma*), fruitive work (*karma*), worldly opinion (*loka*), religious codes (*dharma*) or the injunctions of scripture (*sāstra*). You are all saintly (*sva-sādhu*) simply by the good deeds (*kṛtyam*) you have done. It is not by coming into contact with something that you have become sanctified. I am incapable of properly reciprocating with you, even if I were to attain a lifetime of the demigods." The word *kṛtyam* is in the singular to suggest that even one such action of the *gopīs* can never be repaid.

"Completely cutting off (*saṁvṛścya*) the chains of attachment to relatives (*geha-śṛṅkhalāḥ*) such as husbands, sisters-in-law, fathers and brothers, which should not be cut, you worshipped Me (*mābhajan*)." Another meaning of *mā abhajan* is as follows: *Mā* is used as a negative in this case meaning, "You cut off all bonds to your family and after attaining Me, you no longer reciprocate with them, unlike immature *yogīs*, who still maintain some family attachment."

“I, on the other hand, worship you but at the same time continue having affection for My parents, brothers and friends. Even though I have promised to reciprocate equally with those who surrender unto Me (*ye yathā māṁ prapadyante*), I failed to carry out that promise in regards to you. I did not respond as you did by giving up My father, mother, brother and friends. It is impossible for Me to repay you for what you have done. Therefore let your own pure character be the reward. Although your good character makes you forgive Me for My fault and relieve Me of My debt, still I remain forever indebted to you.”

The *gopīs* then considered in their minds, “Even though Kṛṣṇa, being the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is full of all transcendental qualities, devoid of the slightest trace of any fault, and knows all about our love for Him, in order to establish the superiority of our love for Him, and to make Himself indebted to us, He has performed this act of giving us up. We, who wanted to defeat Kṛṣṇa and criticize Him for His conduct with our riddles, have been most immoral in our intent, whereas He desired only to establish our exalted position. We could never act like that! Thus in effect we have become conquered by Kṛṣṇa’s love.”

Thus ends the commentary on the Thirty Second Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Thirty-three

The Rāsa Dance

|| 10.33.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

itthaṁ bhagavato gopyaḥ śrutvā vācaḥ su-peśalāḥ

jahur viraha-jaṁ tāpaṁ tad-aṅgopacitāśiṣaḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: When the cowherd girls heard the Supreme Personality of Godhead speak these most charming words, they forgot their distress caused by separation from Him. Touching His transcendental limbs, they felt all their desires fulfilled.

COMMENTARY

This chapter describes the *rāsa* dance, various amusements and playing in the Yamunā. There is also an exchange of questions and answers between Śukadeva Gosvāmī and King Parīkṣit.

The *gopīs*' desires (*āśiṣaḥ:kāmāḥ*) were fulfilled by touching Kṛṣṇa's limbs and by hearing His charming (*su-peṣalāḥ*) words. Another meaning: "The *gopīs* gave up their

pain of separation upon hearing Kṛṣṇa's enchanting words, and Kṛṣṇa increased His joy by touching their bodies."

Thus it is implied that after hearing Kṛṣṇa's replies to their questions, the *gopīs*' minds were pacified, and the pastimes of embracing and kissing commenced.

|| 10.33.2 ||

tatrārabhata govindo rāsa-krīḍām anuvrataiḥ

strī-ratnair anvitaḥ prītair anyonyābaddha-bāhubhiḥ

TRANSLATION

There on the Yamunā's banks Lord Govinda then began the pastime of the rāsa dance in the company of those jewels among women, the faithful gopīs, who joyfully linked their arms together.

COMMENTARY

When the actions of singing, dancing, kissing and embracing combine together they produce *rāsa*. Amusement composed of *rāsa* is called *rāsa-krīḍām* or the *rāsa* dance. Joyfully entwining their arms together, Kṛṣṇa played with those *gopīs*, the jewels among women, who were now favorably disposed (*anuvrataiḥ*).

|| 10.33.3 ||

rāsotsavaḥ sampravṛtto gopī-maṇḍala-maṇḍitaḥ

yogeśvareṇa kṛṣṇena tāsāṁ madhye dvayor dvayoḥ

praviṣṭena gṛhītānāṁ kaṇṭhe sva-nikaṭaṁ striyaḥ

yaṁ manyeran nabhas tāvad vimāna-śata-saṅkulam

divaukasāṁ sa-dārāṇām autsukyāpahṛtātmanām

TRANSLATION

The festive rāsa dance commenced, with the gopīs arrayed in a circle. Lord Kṛṣṇa expanded Himself and entered between each pair of gopīs, and as that master of mystic power placed His arms around their necks, each girl thought He was standing next to her alone. The demigods and their wives were

overwhelmed with eagerness to witness the rāsa dance, and they soon crowded the sky with their hundreds of celestial airplanes.

COMMENTARY

This verse describes how Kṛṣṇa consorted with the *gopīs*. The *rāsa* dance is called a festival (*rāsa-utsavaḥ*) because it was full of music, singing and dancing, merrymaking and wonderful food in the form of blissful nectar for the *cātaka* birds of the devotee's eyes and minds. The festival began in a perfectly arranged way (*sampravṛtto: samyak*) with Kṛṣṇa entering between each pair of *gopīs* who were standing in a circle. One should not think that this verse means that Kṛṣṇa initiated the *rāsa-krīḍa*. Kṛṣṇa was not the doer; the *rāsa-līlā* was the doer. Kṛṣṇa gave the *rāsa-līlā* the independence to initiate the action.

Kṛṣṇa was present as one of the ingredients of the festival. In this way, more than Kṛṣṇa Himself, more than all His energies and more than all His other pastimes, the supreme position of the *rāsotsavaḥ* is proclaimed throughout the universe. Therefore even such personalities as goddess Laksmī, though greedily hankering to achieve these pastimes, could not do so.

How was Kṛṣṇa positioned between the *gopīs*? Kṛṣṇa entered between the *gopīs* embracing their necks on either side. In this regard, the sixth verse of this chapter states, *madhye maṇīnāṁ haimānāṁ mahā-marakato yathā*, "Kṛṣṇa was like a great emerald among all the golden jewels." Since the word *madhye* (middle) and also the singular form of the word *marakata* (emerald) are used, and since in the previous verse it is not explicitly stated that Kṛṣṇa was present in individual forms together with each *gopī*, we understand that Kṛṣṇa was actually present in the center of all the *gopīs* like the whorl of a lotus flower.

This demonstrates the dexterity of Kṛṣṇa's movement that He was able to dance next to each pair of *gopīs*. In the flash of a second, Kṛṣṇa left the middle where He was standing, and danced with and embraced the three hundred million *gopīs* who were standing in the *rāsa* circle, and then again He returned to the middle. Kṛṣṇa's movement was quicker than a fire brand, because at that time everyone could see Kṛṣṇa standing in the center, and also situated between the *gopīs* in the circle of the *rāsa* dance. In this connection, Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura has said:

aṅganām aṅganām antarā mādhavo

mādhavaṁ mādhavaṁ cāntareṇāṅganāḥ

ittham ākalpite maṇḍale madhya-gaḥ

sañjagau veṇunā devakī-nandanaḥ

> “Mādhava was between each pair of *gopīs*, and also each *gopī* was between two Mādhavas. Devakīnandana (Kṛṣṇa) also appeared in the middle of the circle, playing upon His flute and singing.”

The basic cause for this extraordinary event is indicated by the word *yogeṣvareṇa*, meaning that Kṛṣṇa is the perfect master of all methods of artistic skills and the means of acting thus. The *Amara-koṣa* dictionary says that the word *yoga* means “method.” Or *yoga* can refer to *yogamāyā*, the great potency who is expprt in doing the impossible for her Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Knowing that Kṛṣṇa desired to embrace all the *gopīs* simultaneously, *yogamāyā* manifested a Kṛṣṇa for each *gopī* to solve this problem.

There are two ways of understanding the phrase “Kṛṣṇa entered between each pair of *gopīs*.” The first understanding is that Kṛṣṇa expanded as two forms on the two sides of each *gopī*. The second understanding is that one Kṛṣṇa entered between each pair of *gopīs*. In the first explanation, each *gopī* would have Kṛṣṇa on each shoulder, which would be contradictory for her. But this is not a problem, because the great *yogamāyā-śakti* made each *gopī* aware that only one Kṛṣṇa was touching her. There is however, no contradiction in the second explanation.

Being maddened by love, each *gopī* thought, “Kṛṣṇa is here embracing me alone. Even though we see Him dancing all around, it is simply because of His unique expertise in the art of dancing.”

The *Vaiṣṇava ācāryas* say that Devakīnandana stood in the center of the *rāsa* dance along with Śrīmati Rādhārani, because She is the most excellent of the *gopīs*, and the very cause of the *rāsa-līlā* as stated in the *Rādhā Sata-nāma Stotra: rāsa-kṛīḍām kāraṇam.*

At that moment (*tāvat*), the sky became crowded with hundreds of airplanes belonging to the denizens of heaven, headed by Brahmā. They eagerly watched Kṛṣṇa’s *rāsa* dancing, but they were not qualified to witness Kṛṣṇa’s confidential pastimes with the *gopīs* because they are *dāsya-bhaktas*, worshiping Him in the mood of servitude. *Yogamāyā* thus arranged everything so expertly that the men of heaven could see the dancing of Kṛṣṇa but not His beloved *gopīs*.

|| 10.33.4 ||

tato dundubhayo nedur nipetuḥ puṣpa-vṛṣṭayaḥ

jagur gandharva-patayaḥ sa-strīkās tad-yaśo 'malam

TRANSLATION

Kettledrums then resounded in the sky while flowers rained down and the chief Gandharvas and their wives sang Lord Kṛṣṇa's spotless glories.

|| 10.33.5 ||

valayānāṁ nūpurāṇāṁ kiṅkiṇīnāṁ ca yoṣitām

sa-priyāṇām abhūc chabdas tumulo rāsa-maṇḍale

TRANSLATION

A tumultuous sound arose from the armlets, ankle bells and waist bells of the gopīs as they sported with their beloved Kṛṣṇa in the circle of the rāsa dance.

COMMENTARY

The bangles, ankle bells and waist bells of the *gopīs* who were with Kṛṣṇa (*sa-priyāṇām*) made a great sound. *Ca* (and) indicates that musical instruments such as various types of drums were also played. However, indicating them only by *ca* means that they were not the principal instruments, and did not cover the sound of the *gopīs*' bangles and other ornaments.

|| 10.33.6 ||

tatrātiśuśubhe tābhir bhagavān devakī-sutaḥ

madhye maṇīnāṁ haimānāṁ mahā-marakato yathā

TRANSLATION

In the midst of the dancing gopīs, Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared most brilliant, like an exquisite sapphire in the midst of golden ornaments.

COMMENTARY

Even though Kṛṣṇa is the son of Devakī (*devakī-sutaḥ*), a member of the *kṣatriya* community, and even though He is *Bhagavān*, full in all six opulences, He appeared especially beautiful in the midst of the lovely cowherd damsels of Vraja. Though Kṛṣṇa's complexion resembles a blue sapphire, by mixing with the golden bodies of the *gopīs*, He manifested a splendid emerald (*marakata-mani*) color. The word *mahā* is used to indicate that Kṛṣṇa's beauty was extraordinary. Other authorities say that the word *marakata* means blue sapphire. Thus the word *mahā-marakato*, means appearing like an emerald or like a sapphire in some versions of the text.

|| 10.33.7 ||

pāda-nyāsair bhuja-vidhutibhiḥ sa-smitair bhrū-vilāsair

bhajyan madhyaiś cala-kuca-paṭaiḥ kuṇḍalair gaṇḍa-lolaiḥ

svidyan-mukhyaḥ kavara-rasanāgranthayaḥ kṛṣṇa-vadhvo

gāyantyas taṁ taḍita iva tā megha-cakre virejuḥ

TRANSLATION

As the gopīs sang in praise of Kṛṣṇa, their feet danced, their hands gestured, and their eyebrows moved with playful smiles. With their braids and belts tied tight, their waists bending, their faces perspiring, the garments on their breasts moving this way and that, and their earrings swinging on their cheeks, Lord Kṛṣṇa's young consorts shone like streaks of lightning in a mass of clouds.

COMMENTARY

Just as Kṛṣṇa appeared more beautiful in the *gopīs*' presence, they appeared even more so in His association. The foot movements of the *gopīs* matched the mood and rhythm of the songs. In this way the *gopīs* manifested more and more colorful dances and songs along with the shaking of their arms (*bhuja-vidhutibhiḥ*), which were locked together. Furthermore, sometimes they would let go of each other's interlocked arms and dexterously display different *mudras* (hand movements) to act out the meaning of the songs, along with various kinds of evocative gestures with their smiling eyebrows (*sa-smitair bhrū-vilāsair*). This was done to convey their transcen-dental moods and to show their own expertise.

Bhajyan madhyaiś means that the *gopīs* waists were bending, either because of their natural slenderness or because of the swirling movements of their dancing. The *gopīs* picked up the cloths (*cala-kuca-paṭaiḥ*) that they had previously laid on the ground for Kṛṣṇa to sit on, and waved them in the air while they sang.

According to the *Nānārtha-varga* dictionary, the word *vadhū* can mean wife, sister-in-law or else a woman in general. Therefore, *Kṛṣṇa-vadhvaḥ* means "the woman enjoyed by Kṛṣṇa." If we take the meaning of *vadhū* as wife, it would contradict the words of Bhīṣma who said, *prakṛtim agan kila yasya gopa-vadhvaḥ*, "Let me surrender to Kṛṣṇa whose mood was attained by the wives of the *gopas* (*gopa-vadhvaḥ*) during the *rāsa-līlā*" (SB 1.9.40) Bhisma did not say "wives of Kṛṣṇa," so we should not give such an interpretation. In *Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī*, Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī also does not interpret *vadhū* as wife in this verse. He says the golden-limbed *gopīs* are the *vadhūs* "wives" of beautiful dark-blue Kṛṣṇa in the sense that, just like wives, the *gopīs* are embraced only by Kṛṣṇa, sheltered only by Kṛṣṇa and enjoyed only by Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.33.8 ||

uccair jagur nṛtyamānā rakta-kaṇṭhyo rati-priyāḥ

kṛṣṇābhimarśa-muditā yad-gītenedam āvṛtam

TRANSLATION

Eager to enjoy conjugal love, their throats colored with various pigments, the gopīs sang loudly and danced. They were overjoyed by Kṛṣṇa's touch, and they sang songs that filled the entire universe.

COMMENTARY

The word (*nṛtyamānā*) means dancing, honor or respect. Kṛṣṇa honored the *gopīs* for their dancing and singing. *Rakta-kaṇṭha* means the *gopīs*' throats were tinged with various *rāgas*. *Saṅgīta-sāra*, an authoritative book on music, says *tāvanta eva rāgāḥ sūryāvatyo jīva-jātayaḥ, teṣu ṣoḍaśa-sāhasrī purā gopī-kṛtā varā:* "There are as many musical *rāgas* (melodies) as there are species of life. Among those *rāgas*, the sixteen thousand sung by the *gopīs* are the foremost."

The *gopīs* were very attached to the affection (*rati-priyāḥ*) shown by Kṛṣṇa. Becoming blissful from Kṛṣṇa's touch (*abhimarśa:sparśa*), they did not feel any fatigue from dancing. Their singing (*yad-gītena*) pervaded (*āvṛtam*) the entire universe (*idam*). The words *yad-gītenedam āvṛtam* also indicate that even today devotees throughout the world sing the praises of Kṛṣṇa, following the example of the *gopīs*.

|| 10.33.9 ||

kācit samaṁ mukundena svara-jātīr amiśritāḥ

unninye pūjitā tena prīyatā sādhu sādhv iti

tad eva dhruvam unninye tasyai mānaṁ ca bahv adāt

TRANSLATION

One gopī, joining Lord Mukunda in His singing, sang pure melodious tones that rose harmoniously above His. Kṛṣṇa was pleased and showed great appreciation for her performance, saying "Excellent! Excellent!" Then another gopī repeated the same melody, but in a special metrical pattern, and Kṛṣṇa praised her also.

COMMENTARY

The *svaras* (seven notes of the scale) are born from the *śrutis*. These seven *svaras* correspond somewhat to the cries of the peacock, *cātaka*, goat, crane, cuckoo, stork and elephant. There are eighteen *jātis* (chromatic tones) which arise from these *svaras*. *Jātis* are the source of *rāgas*. There are two types of *jātis*: pure and distorted. The pure *jātis* are the seven harmonic tones known as *ṣaḍja, ṛṣabha, gāndhāra, madhyama, pañcama, daivata* and *niṣāda*. When they are transformed (flattened or sharpened) they are known as distorted *vikṛta*.

Though they all sang, Kṛṣṇa did not sing at the same time (*amiśritāḥ*) as the *gopīs*. Another meaning of *amiśritāḥ* is that the *gopīs* sang with pure *jātis*, not mixed with any intermediate tones.

This was possible because the *gopī* was singing only these pure harmonic tones, due to her supreme expertise. Although she was performing this difficult feat, she vibrated them excellently. Appreciating the skilful singing of this *gopī*, Kṛṣṇa honored her by giving His yellow *chādar*. Authorities conclude that this *gopī* was Viśākhā.

Another *gopī* expertly performed the *ālāpa* of one song with *dhruva tāla*. Kṛṣṇa honored her with ornaments such as finger rings, jewel-studded necklaces and His own slippers. This *gopī* displayed even more excellence than Viśākhā and was none other than Lalitā-sakhī. Seeing that the *gopīs* were reluctant to bring the *rāgas* and *rāginīs* they sung to even greater levels of beauty, Rādhā Herself then sang. From this we can understand that among all the *gopīs*, Rādhā was endowed with most the excellent and attractive of all qualities.

|| 10.33.10 ||

kācid rāsa-pariśrāntā pārśva-sthasya gadā-bhṛtaḥ

jagrāha bāhunā skandhaṁ ślathad-valaya-mallikā

TRANSLATION

When one gopī grew tired from the rāsa dance, She turned to Kṛṣṇa, standing at Her side holding a baton, and grasped His shoulder with Her arm. The dancing had loosened Her bracelets and the flowers in Her hair.

COMMENTARY

After alluding to the excellent singing and dancing of Lalitā and Viśākhā, the most prominent *gopī*, Śrī Rādhā, is indicated by describing Her good fortune. *Gadā-bhṛtaḥ* refers to Kṛṣṇa, as the person who held or encouraged discussions (*gadam*) about the various merits of the two *gopīs*' singing. One *gopī* leaned upon Kṛṣṇa's shoulder with Her right arm. Her bracelets, ornaments and the flowers in Her hair all became loose. This special *gopī* was Vṛṣabhānunandini Śrī Rādhā, because as an independent lover She is showing the mentality of being superior to Her boyfriend.

|| 10.33.11 ||

tatraikāṁsa-gataṁ bāhuṁ kṛṣṇasyotpala-saurabham

candanāliptam āghrāya hṛṣṭa-romā cucumba ha

TRANSLATION

Upon the shoulder of one gopī Kṛṣṇa placed His arm, whose natural blue-lotus fragrance was mixed with that of the sandalwood pulp anointing it. As the gopī relished that fragrance, her bodily hair stood on end in jubilation, and she kissed His arm.

COMMENTARY

One *gopī* then kissed the arm resting on her shoulder (*āṁsa-gataṁ bāhuṁ*), which was anointed with sandalwood paste. Even though that arm was anointed with sandalwood pulp, the prominent aroma of lotuses, which naturally emanates from Kṛṣṇa's body, covered the fragrance of the sandalwood pulp. Since this *gopī* is acting in the same way as the *gopī* described in verse (10.32.4). she is indeed *Śyāmalā-sakhī*.

|| 10.33.12 ||

kasyāścin nāṭya-vikṣipta kuṇḍala-tviṣa-maṇḍitam

gaṇḍaṁ gaṇḍe sandadhatyāḥ prādāt tāmbūla-carvitam

TRANSLATION

Next to Kṛṣṇa's cheek one gopī put her own, beautified by the effulgence of her earrings, which glittered as she danced. Kṛṣṇa then carefully gave her the betel nut He was chewing.

COMMENTARY

One *gopī*, whose swinging earrings reflected brightly on her cheeks, touched her cheek to Kṛṣṇa's check on the pretense of fatigue. Kṛṣṇa offered some of His chewed betel-nut by passing over as He kissed her. The word *prādāt* comes from *pra* in *prakrsta* "in a special way," and *ādāt* "He gave." This is *Śaibyā*, the *gopī* referred to in verse five of the last chapter.

|| 10.33.13 ||

nṛtyatī gāyatī kācit kūjan nūpura-mekhalā

pārśva-sthācyuta-hastābjaṁ śrāntādhāt stanayoḥ śivam

TRANSLATION

Another gopī became fatigued as she danced and sang, the bells on her ankles and waist tinkling. So she placed upon her breasts the comforting lotus hand of Lord Acyuta, who was standing by her side.

COMMENTARY

While dancing and singing one *gopī* placed Kṛṣṇa's lotus hand upon her breast. This particular *gopī* is Candrāvalī, who seized Kṛṣṇa's hand in (10.32.4). Padmā-sakhī held Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet on her breast (10.32.5). Though there is a difference between holding Kṛṣṇa's hands and feet, in both cases the *gopī* did this to relieve herself of the love pains in her breast. Thus the present verse can also refer to Padmā-sakhī. Though the eighth *gopī*, namely Bhadrā, is not mentioned here, she is mentioned in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*.

|| 10.33.14 ||

gopyo labdhvācyutaṁ kāntaṁ śriya ekānta-vallabham

gṛhīta-kaṇṭhyas tad-dorbhyāṁ gāyantyas tam vijahrire

TRANSLATION

Having attained as their intimate lover Lord Acyuta, the exclusive consort of the goddess of fortune, the gopīs enjoyed great pleasure. They sang His glories as He held their necks with His arms.

COMMENTARY

In this way, other gopīs enjoyed with Kṛṣṇa according to their individual ecstatic sentiments. The wives of Kāliya said that Laksmī performed severe penances to attain Kṛṣṇa but could not attain Him (*yad-vāñchayā śrīr lalanācarat tapo* (SB 10.16.36). Uddhava also said that Laksmī could not get the same mercy as the Vraja-gopīs achieved (*nāyaṁ śriyo 'ṅga u nitānta-rateḥ prasādaḥ*. (SB 10.47.60) The *Bṛhad-bhāgavat*ā*mṛta* says that Laksmī became greedy to attain Kṛṣṇa upon seeing His beauty. Even though she performed severe penances, still she could not attain Him (*srīprekṣya kṛṣṇa-saundaryaṁ tatra lubdhvācarat tapaḥ*). From these verses it must be concluded that Laksmī did not attain Kṛṣṇa. Therefore the phrase *sriya ekānta-vallabham* in this verse cannot mean "Kṛṣṇa was the exclusive lover of Laksmī."

Instead the meaning is as follows: Attaining the most attractive Acyuta Kṛṣṇa as their exclusive lover (*ekānta*), the gopīs encircled His neck with their arms and enjoyed with Him. The word *śrīyaḥ* can mean "who were just like goddesses of fortune." Just as Laksmī enjoys being held upon the chest of Lord Nārāyaṇa, similarly the Vraja-gopīs enjoyed having their necks encircled by the arms of Kṛṣṇa. Or else, because Kṛṣṇa is one with Nārāyaṇa, Kṛṣṇa is also the beloved of the goddess of fortune.

|| 10.33.15 ||

karṇotpalālaka-viṭaṅka-kapola-gharma-

vaktra-śriyo valaya-nūpura-ghoṣa-vādyaiḥ

gopyaḥ samaṁ bhagavatā nanṛtuḥ sva-keśa-

srasta-srajo bhramara-gāyaka-rāsa-goṣṭhyām

TRANSLATION

Enhancing the beauty of the gopīs' faces were the lotus flowers behind their ears, the locks of hair decorating their cheeks, and drops of perspiration. The reverberation of their armlets and ankle bells made a loud musical sound, and

their chaplets scattered. Thus the gopīs danced with the Supreme Lord in the arena of the rāsa dance as swarms of bees sang in accompaniment.

COMMENTARY

After describing the splendid excellence of their dancing and singing, Śukadeva Gosvāmī now describes the magnificent beauty of the *gopīs*' faces, which were enhanced by swaying earrings, scattered hair and the drops of perspiration on their foreheads. All of this intensified the loveliness of their faces as they danced. The melodious tinkling of their bangles and ankle bells surpassed the music of the drums, flutes and other instruments that were playing. The presiding deities of the instruments all appeared there to make their lives successful. Amazingly, the instruments sounded without anyone having to play them. The fragrant flower garlands tied in the *gopīs*' hair loosened and fell to the ground, as if their hair styles, pleased with the skilful dance steps of the *gopīs*, were offering flowers in appreciation of their talent.

|| 10.33.16 ||

evaṁ pariṣvaṅga-karābhimarśa-snigdhekṣaṇoddāma-vilāsa-hāsaiḥ

reme rameśo vraja-sundarībhir yathārbhakaḥ sva-pratibimba-vibhramaḥ

TRANSLATION

In this way Lord Kṛṣṇa, the original Lord Nārāyaṇa, master of the goddess of fortune, took pleasure in the company of the young women of Vraja by embracing them, caressing them and glancing lovingly at them as He smiled His broad, playful smiles. It was just as if a child were playing with his own reflection.

COMMENTARY

All these elements of song, dance and beauty brought Kṛṣṇa's play of love to perfection. During the *rāsa* dance Kṛṣṇa relished varieties of enjoyment in direct association with the *gopīs*. When the dance reached a climax, Kṛṣṇa touched (*ābhimarśa*) the *gopīs*' left breasts with His right hand (*kara*) and counted the *tāla* of the music on their breasts by tapping His fingers to the beat. The phrase *snigdha-īkṣaṇa* means that Kṛṣṇa glanced lovingly or looked at the private parts of *gopīs*' bodies as they danced. *Hāsaiḥ* indicates that Kṛṣṇa's face bloomed with smiles after receiving the *gopīs*' sweet kisses.

Kṛṣṇa is addressed as *rameśo*, which means He is the master of all opulences. It can also mean Kṛṣṇa is the exclusive lover (*ramana*) of the *gopīs*. Enchanted by the pure love of the gopīs, Kṛṣṇa sported with them just like a frolicsome boy plays with his own shadow

(*pratibimba*). But how could one person enjoy with thousands of *gopīs*? Kṛṣṇa expanded His form into many to delight (*vibhramaḥ*) with each *gopī* who was also an expansion of His own form (*bimba*). The *gopīs* were the *hlādinī-śakti*, pleasure potencies, expanded from Kṛṣṇa's personal form (*svarūpa*). Similarly *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (3.2.11) states that *sva-bimbaṁ* refers to Kṛṣṇa's own form. Therefore the meaning of the verse is: "Kṛṣṇa, expanding Himself in unlimited, fully potent forms (*prābhava-prakāśa-rupa*), enjoyed with each of the *gopīs* who were manifested from His own internal potency." The phrase *sva-pratibimba* (His own reflection) cannot be explained in any other way. To say that *bimba* means shadow is inappropriate.

|| 10.33.17 ||

tad-aṅga-saṅga-pramudākulendriyāḥ keśān dukūlaṁ kuca-paṭṭikāṁ vā

nāñjaḥ prativyoḍhum alaṁ vraja-striyo visrasta-mālābharaṇāḥ kurūdvaha

TRANSLATION

Their senses overwhelmed by the joy of having His physical association, the gopīs could not prevent their hair, their dresses and the cloths covering their breasts from becoming disheveled. Their garlands and ornaments scattered, O hero of the Kuru dynasty.

COMMENTARY

The touch of Kṛṣṇa's body (*tad-aṅga-saṅga*) thrilled the gopīs with ecstasy. As a result, their hair, bodices, dresses, garlands and ornaments all became disheveled.

|| 10.33.18 ||

kṛṣṇa-vikrīḍitaṁ vīkṣya mumuhuḥ khe-cara-striyaḥ

kāmārditāḥ śaśāṅkaś ca sa-gaṇo vismito 'bhavat

TRANSLATION

The wives of the demigods, observing Kṛṣṇa's playful activities from their airplanes, were entranced and became agitated with lust. Indeed, even the moon and his entourage, the stars, became astonished.

COMMENTARY

The heavenly women became agitated by lusty desires (*kāmārditāḥ*) for Kṛṣṇa. The moon along with the constellations became astonished. In one version the word *kāmārditā* is in the masculine form modifying the moon, which is male. Thus the moon, taking up the mood of a woman, was also tormented by lust for Kṛṣṇa.

The demigoddesses traveling in the sky (*khe-cara-striyaḥ*) could see the *rāsa-līla*. But Yogamāyā covered the vision of the males watching the *rāsa* dance, so they could not see the bodies of the Vraja-gopīs and their intimate pastimes with Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.33.19 ||

kṛtvā tāvantam ātmānaṁ yāvatīr gopa-yoṣitaḥ

reme sa bhagavāṁs tābhir ātmārāmo 'pi līlayā

TRANSLATION

Expanding Himself us many times as there were cowherd women to associate with, the Supreme Lord, though self-satisfied, playfully enjoyed their company.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa then expanded Himself into as many forms as there were *gopīs* to enjoy privately with each one in a separate grove. It has already been explained that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is eternally free from all material desire, and perfectly situated on the platform of spiritual self-satisfaction (*ātmārāmaḥ*).

|| 10.33.20 ||

tāsāṁ rati-vihāreṇa śrāntānāṁ vadanāni saḥ

prāmṛjat karuṇaḥ premṇā śantamenāṅga pāṇinā

TRANSLATION

Seeing that the gopīs were fatigued from conjugal enjoyment, my dear King, merciful Kṛṣṇa lovingly wiped their faces with His comforting hand.

COMMENTARY

There are two versions of this verse: *tāsāṁ rati-vihāreṇa śrāntānām* meaning “fatigued from conjugal enjoyment,” and *tāsāṁ ati-vihāreṇa śrāntānāṁ* meaning “fatigued from enjoying excessively with them.” Seeing how the *gopīs* were tired from conjugal enjoyment, Kṛṣṇa stopped sporting and lovingly touched their faces with His comforting hand. The word *prāmṛjat* (wiped) implies Kṛṣṇa also fanned the *gopīs*, massaged their tired bodies with scented oils, applied sandalwood paste and offered them betel-nuts.

|| 10.33.21 ||

gopyaḥ sphurat-puraṭa-kuṇḍala-kuntala-tviḍ-

gaṇḍa-śriyā sudhita-hāsa-nirīkṣaṇena

mānaṁ dadhatya ṛṣabhasya jaguḥ kṛtāni
puṇyāni tat-kara-ruha-sparśa-pramodāḥ

TRANSLATION

The gopīs honored their hero with smiling glances sweetened by the beauty of their cheeks and the effulgence of their curly locks and glittering golden earrings. Overjoyed from the touch of His fingernails, they chanted the glories of His all-auspicious transcendental pastimes.

COMMENTARY

After displaying the mood of controlling their lover by having Kṛṣṇa adorn them with ornaments, the gopīs emerged from their love groves. They gathered in a group to sing auspicious songs signifying the completion of the *rāsa* dance. The *gopīs* honored Kṛṣṇa with their golden bangles, locks of hair, cheeks lit by their glittering earrings, and their sweet, smiling glances. Thrilled with the touch of Kṛṣṇa’s nails, they sang of His all-auspicious (*puṇyāni*) transcendental pastimes.

|| 10.33.22 ||

tābhir yutaḥ śramam apohitum aṅga-saṅga-

ghṛṣṭa-srajaḥ sa kuca-kuṅkuma-rañjitāyāḥ

gandharva-pālibhir anudruta āviśad vāḥ

śrānto gajībhir ibha-rāḍ iva bhinna-setuḥ

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa's garland had been crushed during His conjugal dalliance with the gopīs and colored vermilion by the kuṅkuma powder on their breasts. To dispel the fatigue of the gopīs, Kṛṣṇa entered the water of the Yamunā, followed swiftly by bees who were singing like the best of the Gandharvas. He appeared like a lordly elephant entering the water to relax in the company of his consorts. Indeed, the Lord had transgressed all worldly and Vedic morality just as a powerful elephant might break the dikes in a paddy field.

COMMENTARY

After the *rāsa utsava* Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* played in the Yamunā, just as a husband and wife take an *avabhṛta* bath to complete a *soma yajña*. To dispel His fatigue, Kṛṣṇa, followed by bees that were the best of singers (*gandharva-pālibhir*), entered the waters of the Yamunā along with the *gopīs*, whose bodies had become stained with the *kuṅkuma* from their breasts during their conjugal dalliance, and whose garlands were crushed by Kṛṣṇa's limbs. Kṛṣṇa appeared like a bull elephant breaking all the embankments to enter the water and enjoy with his bevy of female elephants. *Bhinna-setuḥ* also means Kṛṣṇa broke the walls or transgressed the boundaries of worldly morality by enacting the *rāsa* dance with His beloved *gopīs*.

|| 10.33.23 ||

so 'mbhasy alaṁ yuvatibhiḥ parisicyamānaḥ

premṇekṣitaḥ prahasatībhir itas tato 'ṅga

vaimānikaiḥ kusuma-varṣibhir īdyamāno

reme svayaṁ sva-ratir atra gajendra-līlaḥ

TRANSLATION

My dear King, in the water Kṛṣṇa found Himself being splashed on all sides by the laughing gopīs, who looked at Him with love. As the demigods worshiped Him by showering flowers from their airplanes, the self-satisfied Lord took pleasure in playing like the king of the elephants.

COMMENTARY

There are two versions: *premṇekṣitaḥ* (glancing with *prema*), and *premṇokṣita* (moistened with *prema*). The gopīs gazed at Kṛṣṇa and laughed loudly as they splashed Him with water, or moistened Him with their love. As Kṛṣṇa, the self-satisfied lover (*sva-ratiḥ*), enjoyed with the gopīs, the demigods in the sky worshiped Him with showers of flowers.

|| 10.33.24 ||

tataś ca kṛṣṇopavane jala-sthala prasūna-gandhānila-juṣṭa-dik-taṭe

cacāra bhṛṅga-pramadā-gaṇāvṛto yathā mada-cyud dviradaḥ kareṇubhiḥ

TRANSLATION

Then the Lord strolled through a small forest on the bank of the Yamunā. This forest was filled to its limits with breezes carrying the fragrances of all the flowers growing on the land and in the water. Followed by His entourage of bees and beautiful women, Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared like an intoxicated elephant with his she-elephants.

COMMENTARY

After playing in the water, drying and massaging their bodies, and dressing in their favorite clothing and ornaments supplied by the *mañjarīs*, Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* entered the countless groves on the bank of the Yamunā for special pastimes. The groves had wide horizons served by breezes carrying the aroma of flowers growing in the water. Kṛṣṇa, surrounded by buzzing bees and love-filled *gopīs*, ambled along like a maddened elephant (*mada-cyut*) as He entered the groves.

|| 10.33.25 ||

evaṁ śaśāṅkāṁśu-virājitā niśāḥ sa satya-kāmo 'nuratābalā-gaṇaḥ

siṣeva ātmany avaruddha-saurataḥ sarvāḥ śarat-kāvya-kathā-rasāśrayāḥ

TRANSLATION

Although the gopīs were firmly attached to Lord Kṛṣṇa, whose desires are always fulfilled, the Lord was not internally affected by any mundane sex desire. Still, to perform His pastimes the Lord took advantage of all those moonlit autumn nights, which inspire poetic descriptions of transcendental affairs.

COMMENTARY

In summarizing the *rāsa-līla*, which occurred on the full moon night of the autumn season, the *Bhāgavatam* indicates that similar pastimes with the same variety and splendor took place on other nights of the year.

By the influence of *yogamāyā*, Kṛṣṇa enjoyed the whole night, which extended for a night of Brahmā, under the soothing rays of the full moon (*śaśāṅkāṁśu-virājitā*). Kṛṣṇa took advantage (*siṣeve*) of the Vṛndāvana nights to relish conjugal pastimes with His beloved gopīs. The word *siṣeve* comes from the root *sev* (to serve). This implies that all the nights, which were suitable for the *rāsa-līla*, were thereby enjoyed or served in the most respectful way. This is similar to the expression "the devotees enjoyed or honored *mahā-prāsadam*"

Because Kṛṣṇa's conjugal sports (*kāma*) with the *gopīs* were not material, Kṛṣṇa is called *satya-kāmaḥ* (one whose desires are always fulfilled). *Satya* means the form of the Absolute Truth and *kāma* means pastimes of love. In other words, Kṛṣṇa engaged in pastimes of love which are the Absolute Truth, and the source of all pure selfless love. Though Kṛṣṇa is the original source of all loving enjoyment, He made the *gopīs* the cause of that enjoyment.

Thus, Kṛṣṇa is described as *anurata-abalā-gaṇaḥ*, one who followed after the pleasure of the *gopīs*. Though Kṛṣṇa causes everyone's pleasure, He Himself was attracted to the *gopīs* for pleasure. The word *abalā* also suggests that the *gopīs* were unmatched in their strength or power to express pure love.

Kṛṣṇa's mind was completely absorbed in conjugal pastimes during the *rāsa* dance. Therefore Kṛṣṇa is described as *ātmany avaruddha-saurataḥ*, one whose mind (*ātmā*) was completely absorbed in everything related to conjugal activity (*saurataḥ*), such as the erotic emotions, gestures, indifference, insults, the *vyabhicārī-bhāvas* like perverseness, eagerness and joy, the *sattvika-bhāvas* such as being stunned, sweating, change of color, and the *anubhāvas* of seeing, touching, talking and embracing.

The same usage of the word *saurataḥ*, indicating the many elements of conjugal love, appears in the following verse:

> *evaṁ saurata-saṁlāpair bhagavān jagad-īśvaraḥ*
>
> *sva-rato ramayā reme nara-lokaṁ viḍambayan*
>
> "Thus the self-satisfied Supreme Lord of the universe enjoyed with Rukmiṇī, engaging her in erotic love talks (*saurata-saṁlāpa*) and thus imitated the ways of human society." (SB 10.60.58) The word *samlāpa* included in the verse above is descriptive of the enjoyment. The word *saurata* is devoid of a descriptive element, except to indicate all the other romantic expressions and emotions involved in conjugal relationships.

Kṛṣṇa enjoyed the rāsa-līla every night for twelve months (*sarvāḥ*). What kind of nights were they? In the phrase *sarvāḥ-śarat-rasāśrayāḥ* the word *śarat* can mean just the month of autumn or the period of one year according to the *Amara-koṣa* dictionary. Thus these nights were nights endowed with the virtues of all the six seasons in a year, of which all the *rāsas* expressed in poetic works (*kāvya-kathā*) take shelter (*āsrayāḥ*). *Rāsa* indicates the spiritual bliss one derives from his loving relationship with Śrī Kṛṣṇa.This ecstatic bliss is relished between Kṛṣṇa and His devotees during various transcendental pastimes.

Great Vaisnava poets like Vyāsa, Parāśara, Jayadeva, Līlāśuka (Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura), Govardhanācārya and Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, being inspired by those beautiful autumn nights, have wonderfully described Kṛṣṇa's *rāsa-līla* and His conjugal affairs (*śṛṅgāra-rasa*) with the Vraja-gopīs, which are most difficult to comprehend. Since I am incapable of describing these affairs completely, I have given only a synopsis here.

|| 10.33.26-27 ||

śrī-parīkṣid uvāca

saṁsthāpanāya dharmasya praśamāyetarasya ca

avatīrṇo hi bhagavān aṁśena jagad-īśvaraḥ

sa kathaṁ dharma-setūnāṁ vaktā kartābhirakṣitā

pratīpam ācarad brahman para-dārābhimarśanam

TRANSLATION

Parīkṣit Mahārāja said: O brāhmaṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Lord of the universe, has descended to this earth along with His plenary portion to destroy irreligion and reestablish religious principles. Indeed, He is the original speaker, follower and guardian of moral laws. How, then, could He have violated them by touching other men's wives?

COMMENTARY

Mahārāja Parīkṣit detected many *karmīs* and *jñānīs* in that assembly who were harboring doubts about Kṛṣṇa's activities, because their own hearts were contaminated with mundane desires. Therefore, he asked a question: "In order to establish *dharma* and destroy *adharma* (irreligion), *svayam bhagavān* Kṛṣṇa, whose expansion is Viṣṇu (*aṁśena jagad-īsvaraḥ*) has appeared. Or *svayam bhavagān* Kṛṣṇa has appeared with His *aṁśena*, Balarāma. How then can Kṛṣṇa perform acts contrary (*pratīpam*) to *dharma*? If you say that Kṛṣṇa can act contrary to *dharma* because He is the independent Lord

(*īsvaraḥ*), then He should also accept the sinful reaction, just as He to dharma? If sometimes gets cursed and accepts the result."

|| 10.33.28 ||

āpta-kāmo yadu-patiḥ kṛtavān vai jugupsitam

kim-abhiprāya etan naḥ śaṁśayaṁ chindhi su-vrata

TRANSLATION

O faithful upholder of vows, please destroy our doubt by explaining to us what purpose the self-satisfied Lord of the Yadus had in mind when He behaved so contemptibly.

COMMENTARY

King Parīkṣit continues his inquiry: "If you argue that for the Supreme Lord there is no *adharma* (irreligion), then why would He perform such abominable acts? One cannot answer that He does so to fulfill His desires, because His desires are already fulfilled (*āpta-kāmaḥ*)."

Śukadeva Gosvāmī replied, "But in this avatāra, Kṛṣṇa must do these condemned activities."

Parīkṣit Mahārāja: "Then how could Kṛṣṇa be the head of the Yadus (*yadu-patiḥ*) who follow the highest *dharma*? This is not only our (*naḥ*) doubt (*śaṁśayaṁ*) but the doubt of many people. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is *āpta-kāmaḥ* and *ātmā-rāma*, yet He enjoyed enthusiastically with the *gopīs*, who were the very form of *prema* and bliss. This is a very deep concept, so naturally people will have doubts. You yourself are totally committed to proper conduct (*su-vrata*), still you have become fully absorbed in Kṛṣṇa's pastimes portraying such condemned behavior. This too creates another doubt (*śaṁśayaṁ*)."

|| 10.33.29 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

dharma-vyatikramo dṛṣṭa īśvarāṇāṁ ca sāhasam

tejīyasāṁ na doṣāya vahneḥ sarva-bhujo yathā

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: The status of powerful controllers is not harmed by any apparently audacious transgression of morality we may see in them, for they are just like fire, which devours everything fed into it and remains unpolluted.

COMMENTARY

Though the demigods sometimes perform irreligious activities (*adharma*), they do not get reactions for them. What then to speak of the Supreme Lord? Śukadeva Gosvāmī answers Parīkṣit Mahārāja's first question in six verses (29-34). "Though powerful controllers such as Śiva (*īśvarāṇāṁ*) commit immoral or irreligious acts (*dharma-vyatikramo*) out of rashness (*sāhasam*), they do not need to atone for those acts."

|| 10.33.30 ||

naitat samācarej jātu manasāpi hy anīśvaraḥ

vinaśyaty ācaran mauḍhyād yathārudro 'bdhi-jaṁ viṣam

TRANSLATION

One who is not a great controller should never imitate the behavior of ruling personalities, even mentally. If out of foolishness an ordinary person does imitate such behavior, he will simply destroy himself, just as a person who is not Rudra would destroy himself if he tried to drink an ocean of poison.

COMMENTARY

Parīkṣit Mahārāja might object, "If the demigods commit immoral acts then others, adopting the principle of following a great man's example, will also commit irreligious acts."

Śukadeva Gosvāmī replies in this verse: "Upon seeing the immoral acts of the demigods, an ordinary motal should not even think of committing such sinful acts. Doing so will bring his ruination, just as a person who is not Rudra would destroy himself if he tried to drink an ocean of poison. On the other hand, when Śiva drinks the poison, he enhances his beauty by attaining a blue throat."

|| 10.33.31 ||

īśvarāṇāṁ vacaḥ satyaṁ tathaivācaritaṁ kvacit

teṣāṁ yat sva-vaco-yuktaṁ buddhimāṁs tat samācaret

TRANSLATION

The statements of the Lord's empowered servants are always true, and the acts they perform are exemplary when consistent with those statements. Therefore one who is intelligent should carry out their instructions.

COMMENTARY

Parīkṣit Mahārāja said, "All right, then when can we apply the rule that whatever a great man does others should follow?"

Śukadeva Gosvāmī replied, "The instructions of the demigods or great personalities are always auspicious for the devotees to follow. When the Lord performs pastimes as Rāma, one should follow His instructions. One should perform only those acts which do not contradict the orders given by the demigods or great persons. But even those instructions must be approved by scriptures. Then one can act, otherwise not. An intelligent person should conduct himself in this way.

"Kṛṣṇa ordered Arjuna to kill Aśvatthāmā, who had killed Arjuna's sleeping children in the night." (SB 1.7.35) Arjuna however, did not follow Kṛṣṇa's instructions to kill Aśvatthāmā, because elsewhere Kṛṣṇa said a *brāhmaṇa* should never be killed even if he is sinful. Another instruction is that one should kill a person armed to kill others. Though acting as a *kṣatriya*, Aśvatthāmā was still a *brāhmaṇa* and he was not armed to kill. Therefore according to the scriptural injunctions he should not have been killed. Kṛṣṇa was actually testing Arjuna's knowledge of religious principles by ordering him to kill Asvatthama."

|| 10.33.32 ||

kuśalācaritenaiṣām iha svārtho na vidyate

viparyayeṇa vānartho nirahaṅkāriṇāṁ prabho

TRANSLATION

My dear Prabhu, when these great persons who are free from false ego act piously in this world, they have no selfish motives to fulfill, and even when they act in apparent contradiction to the laws of piety, they are not subject to sinful reactions.

|| 10.33.33 ||

kim utākhila-sattvānāṁ tiryaṅ-martya-divaukasām

īśituś ceśitavyānāṁ kuśalākuśalānvayaḥ

TRANSLATION

How, then, could the Lord of all created beings—animals, men and demigods—have any connection with the piety and impiety that affect His subject creatures?

COMMENTARY

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said, "As the demigods cannot be blamed if they transgress *dharma*, then what to speak of Śrī Kṛṣṇa."

|| 10.33.34 ||

yat-pāda-paṅkaja-parāga-niṣeva-tṛptā

yoga-prabhāva-vidhutākhila-karma-bandhāḥ

svairaṁ caranti munayo 'pi na nahyamānās

tasyecchayātta-vapuṣaḥ kuta eva bandhaḥ

TRANSLATION

Material activities never entangle the devotees of the Supreme Lord, who are fully satisfied by serving the dust of His lotus feet. Nor do material activities entangle those intelligent sages who have freed themselves from the bondage of all fruitive reactions by the power of yoga. So how could there be any question of bondage for the Lord Himself, who assumes His transcendental forms according to His own sweet will?

COMMENTARY

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said, "Even the devotees of the Lord are not bound by religion or irreligion. Satisfied with their exclusive service to the dust of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, the devotees become liberated from the bondage of karma (*karma-bandhāḥ*) by the power of *bhakti-yoga* (*yoga-prabhāva*). What is the question of bondage for the Lord of those

devotees, who accepted (*ātta*) the transcendental bodies (*vapuṣaḥ*) of others' wives by His unrestricted free will (*icchayā*)?"

|| 10.33.35 ||

gopīnāṁ tat-patīnāṁ ca sarveṣām eva dehinām

yo 'ntaś carati so 'dhyakṣaḥ krīḍaneneha deha-bhāk

TRANSLATION

He who lives as the overseeing witness within the gopīs and their husbands, and indeed within all embodied living beings, assumes forms in this world to enjoy transcendental pastimes.

COMMENTARY

After considering that Kṛṣṇa had no fault in embracing others' wives, this verse points out that there is no one superior to Kṛṣṇa who pervades every inch of creation.

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said, "What is Kṛṣṇa's fault in embracing the *gopīs* externally since He is constantly embracing them within their hearts (*sarveṣām-dehinām-antaḥ*)? What is Kṛṣṇa's fault in seeing the external bodies of the *gopīs* when internally He is constantly observing their mind and intelligence (*adhyakṣaḥ*)? What is the fault of Kṛṣṇa who served the bodies of the gopīs (*deha-bhāk*) by various playful gestures such as wiping away the perspiration from their faces after *rāsa-līlā* (*krīdanena*)?"

|| 10.33.36 ||

anugrahāya bhaktānāṁ mānuṣaṁ deham āsthitaḥ

bhajate tādṛśīḥ krīḍa yāḥ śrutvā tat-paro bhavet

TRANSLATION

When the Lord assumes a humanlike body to show mercy to His devotees, He engages in such pastimes as will attract those who hear about them to become dedicated to Him.

COMMENTARY

This verse answers Parīkṣit Mahārāja's second question (v. 28, *kim-abhiprāyaḥ*), "What was Kṛṣṇa's purpose in doing such forbidden activities?"

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said, "Kṛṣṇa acted in this way to show mercy (*anugrahāya*) to His devotees. By hearing about Kṛṣṇa's love dalliance with the gopīs, the living entities situated in human bodies (*mānuṣaṁ deham āsthitaḥ*) will become believers in these topics. Thus it should be understood that Kṛṣṇa's sweet *rāsa* dance, the quintessence of all His pastimes, is like a powerful medicine consisting of *mantras* and jewels. Kṛṣṇa's *rāsa-līla* has an inconceivable spiritual potency to attract the polluted hearts of conditioned souls. The chief qualification to attain this level of devotion involving *mādhurya-rasa* is to have a human body (*mānuṣaṁ deham āsthitaḥ*)."

It is an undeniable fact that any pure hearted person who hears about Kṛṣṇa's conjugal affairs with the damsels of Vraja will become attracted to the sweet lotus feet of the Lord and gradually become a loving servant of Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.33.37 ||

nāsūyan khalu kṛṣṇāya mohitās tasya māyayā

manyamānāḥ sva-pārśva-sthān svān svān dārān vrajaukasaḥ

TRANSLATION

The cowherd men, bewildered by Kṛṣṇa's illusory potency, thought their wives had remained home at their sides. Thus they did not harbor any jealous feelings against Him.

COMMENTARY

Anticipating Parīkṣit Mahārāja might ask, "When Kṛṣṇa enjoyed with the *gopīs* every night of the year, how was it that their husbands, not seeing their wives at home, did not become angry with Kṛṣṇa?"

Śukadeva Gosvāmī replied in this verse: "Everything was perfectly arranged by Kṛṣṇa's internal potency of *yogamāyā*, not His external *mahāmāyā* potency. *Mahāmāyā* has no jurisdiction over the intimate devotees of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Those bewildered by *mahāmāyā* are all opposed to the Lord, whereas the gopīs of Vraja had not a particle of opposition to the Lord. Therefore, *yogamāyā* created as many exact replicas ("doubles") of the *gopīs* as there were *gopīs* who went to meet Kṛṣṇa for the *rāsa* dance, and showed these to the cowherd men. Thus the cowherd men thought that their wives were by their sides.

Ujjvala-nīlamani supports this statement:

māyā-kalpita-tādṛk-strī śīlanenānusūyubhiḥ

na jātu vraja-devīnāṁ patibhiḥ saha saṅgamaḥ

"Those replicas of the cowherd women created by Yogamāyā did not have any sexual contact with their husbands."

As *yogamāyā* is a transcendental energy, her effects must all be eternal and spiritual. Since there was a complete absence of material *māyā*, even the replica *gopīs* remaining by their husbands, though playing the roles of wives, were actually all spiritual entities. Playing the role of wives was their perfection in executing the will of *yogamāyā*. These wives manufactured by *yogamāyā* had absolutely no physical contact with their husbands. It would have been unfitting even for these replica *gopīs*, who have forms similar to the original *gopīs*, to be enjoyed by any other men.

Therefore, the verse says *sva-pārśva-sthān*, "The *gopīs* who were standing by their sides," rather than "The *gopīs* who were in their own beds." Yogamāyā personally reconciled everything, and ensured that their husbands never experienced any lust for them. When the real gopīs returned to their individual homes after the *rāsa* dance, *yogamāyā* made the replica *gopīs* disappear.

|| 10.33.38 ||

brahma-rātra upāvṛtte vāsudevānumoditāḥ

anicchantyo yayur gopyaḥ sva-gṛhān bhagavat-priyāḥ

TRANSLATION

After an entire night of Brahmā had passed, Lord Kṛṣṇa advised the gopīs to return to their homes. Although they did not wish to do so, the Lord's beloved consorts complied with His command.

COMMENTARY

After an entire night of Brahmā (one thousand yuga cycles) passed, the *gopīs* returned to their houses. Kṛṣṇa, whose every desire is fulfilled, wanted His pastimes of singing dancing and sporting with the *gopīs* to last for a night of Brahmā, therefore, one thousand ages entered within a single twelve-hour night. This one thousand *yuga* cycles also fit within the duration of the four *praharas* (eight hours) of human time calculation

at the site of the *rāsa* dance. This inconceivable compression of time compares with the fact that within the ten mile area of Vṛndāvana, Brahmā saw the universe which measures billions of miles during the pastime of his stealing Kṛṣṇa's cows.

Or one may consider that mother Yaśodā could not encircle the small abdomen of child Kṛṣṇa with thousands of ropes, and at another time Kṛṣṇa manifested the entire universe within His mouth. Therefore one should not think that the *rāsa* dance could not possibly last for such a long duration of time. The transcendental power of spiritual reality is concisely explained in Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta:

evaṁ prabhoḥ priyāṇāṁ ca dhāmnaś ca samayasya ca

avicintya-prabhāvatvād atra kiñcin na durghaṭam

"Nothing is impossible for the Lord, His dear devotees, His transcendental abode or the time of His pastimes; for all these entities are inconceivably powerful." The word *vāsudevānumoditāḥ* indicates that Lord Kṛṣṇa advised the *gopīs*, "To assure the success of these pastimes, you and 1 should keep our love secret." The word *vāsudeva*, a name of Kṛṣṇa, also indicates Kṛṣṇa's plenary expansion who acts as the presiding Deity of consciousness. When the word *vāsudeva* is understood in this context, the word *vāsudevānumoditāḥ* indicates that Vāsudeva, the presiding Deity of consciousness, manifested embarrassment and fear of their elders within the *gopīs*' hearts, and therefore it was only with great reluctance that the young girls returned home.

|| 10.33.39 ||

vikrīḍitaṁ vraja-vadhūbhir idaṁ ca viṣṇoḥ

śraddhānvito 'nuśṛṇuyād atha varṇayed yaḥ

bhaktiṁ parāṁ bhagavati pratilabhya kāmaṁ

hṛd-rogam āśv apahinoty acireṇa dhīraḥ

TRANSLATION

Anyone who faithfully hears or describes the Lord's playful affairs with the young gopīs of Vṛndāvana will attain the Lord's pure devotional service. Thus he will quickly become sober and conquer lust, the disease of the heart.

COMMENTARY

One who hears and chants about Kṛṣṇa's *rāsa-līla*, which is the crest-jewel of all pastimes, gets the crest-jewel of all results, namely *kṛṣṇa-prema* (*bhaktiṁ parāṁ*). One who continuously hears (*anuśṛṇuyāt*), glorifies or writes poetry (*varṇayet*) about this autumnal *rāsa-līla* (*idaṁ*) and similar pastimes of Kṛṣṇa described by other poets (*ca*), first of all, even if he has the heart disease of material lust, becomes imbued with *prema*; then, by its effect the disease of the heart is destroyed. Thus it is understood here that this *prema* is independent; it is not weak or dependent like *jñāna-yoga*. Here *kāmaṁ hṛd-rogam* refers to the heart disease of material lust. When the word is used in relation to Kṛṣṇa, however, this meaning is excluded. In relation to Kṛṣṇa *kāmaṁ* is *prema*, pure love, and it has the opposite effect of material lust, *kāmaṁ*.

One who faithfully hears and glorifies Kṛṣṇa's *rāsa* dance is described as learned (*dhīraḥ pandita*), for he does not foolishly doubt, "How can *Kṛṣṇa-prema* appear if material lust is present?" *Kṛṣṇa-prema* will definitely appear in that person who is devoid of foolishness (*dhīraḥ*), and who accepts the statements of scripture with full faith. However, *Kṛṣṇa-prema* will not appear within those who have no faith in Kṛṣṇa or who offend Kṛṣṇa's Holy Name. The divine *rāsa-līlā* is like the loving smile of the intimate devotee of Kṛṣṇa, who is victorious and glorified for his ability to conquer Kṛṣṇa by his pure love.

Thus ends the commentary on the Thirty third Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Thirty-four

Nanda Mahārāja Saved and Śaṅkhacūḍa Slain

|| 10.34.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

ekadā deva-yātrāyāṁ gopālā jāta-kautukāḥ

anobhir anaḍud-yuktaiḥ prayayus te ’mbikā-vanam

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: One day the cowherd men, eager to take a trip to worship Lord Śiva, traveled by bullock carts to the Ambikā forest.

COMMENTARY

This chapter describes how Kṛṣṇa delivered Nanda Mahārāja from being swallowed by a snake. Kṛṣṇa also killed Śaṅkhacūḍa, the son of Kuvera, and took his crown jewel.

After describing the *rāsa-līla* in autumn and before describing the holī-līlā of spring, Śukadeva described the celebration of Śiva-rātri. On Phālguna Kṛṣṇa Caturdaśī, the Vrajavāsīs went to Amibikāvana on the bank of the Sarasvatī River, northwest of Mathurā. Ambikāvana is notable for its deities of Lord Śiva and his wife, goddess Umā. Some authorities say that Ambikāvana was located at Siddhapura in Gujarat.

|| 10.34.2 ||

tatra snātvā sarasvatyāṁ devaṁ paśu-patiṁ vibhum

ānarcur arhaṇair bhaktyā devīṁ ca ṇṛpate ’mbikām

TRANSLATION

O King, after arriving there, they bathed in the Sarasvatī and then devotedly worshiped with various paraphernalia the powerful Lord Paśupati and his consort, goddess Ambikā.

|| 10.34.3 ||

gāvo hiraṇyaṁ vāsāṁsi madhu madhv-annam ādṛtāḥ

brāhmaṇebhyo daduḥ sarve devo naḥ prīyatām iti

TRANSLATION

The cowherd men gave the brāhmaṇas gifts of cows, gold, clothing and cooked grains mixed with honey. Then the cowherds prayed, "May the lord be pleased with us."

COMMENTARY

Gāvaḥ is used for the normal form of the feminine plural accusative case *gah* (cows). Nanda and others gave cows, gold, honey *prasāda* from Śiva's *abhiṣeka*, and cooked rice sprinkled with honey to the *brāhmaṇas*.

|| 10.34.4 ||

ūṣuḥ sarasvatī-tīre jalaṁ prāśya yata-vratāḥ

rajanīṁ tāṁ mahā-bhāgā nanda-sunandakādayaḥ

TRANSLATION

Nanda, Sunanda and the other greatly fortunate cowherds spent that night on the bank of the Sarasvatī, strictly observing their vows. They fasted, taking only water.

COMMENTARY

Sunanda was Nanda's younger (*ka*) brother. After sipping water and observing vows, the Vrajavāsīs spent the night on the bank of the river.

|| 10.34.5 ||

kaścin mahān ahis tasmin vipine 'ti-bubhukṣitaḥ

yadṛcchayāgato nandaṁ śayānam ura-go 'grasīt

TRANSLATION

During the night a huge and extremely hungry snake appeared in that thicket. Slithering on his belly up to the sleeping Nanda Mahārāja, the snake began swallowing him.

COMMENTARY

Mahān-ahiḥ means a boa constrictor. The word *ura-ga* meaning "moving on his belly," is an adjective expressing how the serpent was invisible.

|| 10.34.6 ||

sa cukrośāhinā grastaḥ kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa mahān ayam

sarpo māṁ grāsate tāta prapannaṁ parimocaya

TRANSLATION

In the clutches of the snake, Nanda Mahārāja cried out, "Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, my dear boy! This huge serpent is swallowing me! Please save me, who am surrendered to You!"

COMMENTARY

"He shouted" (*saḥ-cukrośā*) implies that Nanda Mahārāja remem-bered the words of Garga Muni, "Kṛṣṇa would save the inhabitants of Vraja from all dangers."

|| 10.34.7 ||

tasya cākranditaṁ śrutvā gopālāḥ sahasotthitāḥ

grastaṁ ca dṛṣṭvā vibhrāntāḥ sarpaṁ vivyadhur ulmukaiḥ

TRANSLATION

When the cowherd men heard the cries of Nanda, they immediately rose up and saw that he was being swallowed. Distraught, they beat the serpent with blazing torches.

COMMENTARY

Hearing Nanda's cries, the cowherd men began beating the snake with blazing torches (*ūlmukaih*) made from logs.

|| 10.34.8 ||

alātair dahyamāno 'pi nāmuñcat tam uraṅgamaḥ

tam aspṛśat padābhyetya bhagavān sātvatāṁ patiḥ

TRANSLATION

But even though the firebrands were burning him, the serpent would not release Nanda Mahārāja. Then the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, master of His devotees, came to the spot and touched the snake with His foot.

COMMENTARY

Though beaten by those torches (*ālātaiḥ*), the snake did not let go of Nanda.

|| 10.34.9 ||

sa vai bhagavataḥ śrīmat pāda-sparśa-hatāśubhaḥ

bheje sarpa-vapur hitvā rūpaṁ vidyādharārcitam

TRANSLATION

The snake had all his sinful reactions destroyed by the touch of the Supreme Lord's divine foot, and thus he gave up his serpent body and appeared in the form of a worshipable Vidyādhara.

COMMENTARY

The words *rūpaṁ vidyādharārcitam* indicate that the erstwhile snake appeared in a beautiful form worshipable among the demigods called Vidyādharas, because he was freed from offenses by the touch or Kṛṣṇa's foot and thus became the best of the Vidyādharas.

|| 10.34.10 ||

tam apṛcchad dhṛṣīkeśaḥ praṇataṁ samavasthitam

dīpyamānena vapuṣā puruṣaṁ hema-mālinam

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord Hṛṣīkeśa then questioned this personality, who was standing before Him with his head bowed, his brilliantly effulgent body bedecked with golden necklaces.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa inquired from the Vidyādhara in order to instill fear of disrespecting *brāhmaṇas* in all the pilgrims who had gathered there from various villages. Kṛṣṇa is addressed *ḥṛṣīkesa*, the controller of all the senses, to show that He wanted to focus everyone's exclusive attention on the words of the demigod.

|| 10.34.11 ||

ko bhavān parayā lakṣmyā rocate 'dbhuta-darśanaḥ

kathaṁ jugupsitām etāṁ gatiṁ vā prāpito 'vaśaḥ

TRANSLATION

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] My dear sir, you appear so wonderful, glowing with such great beauty. Who are you? And who forced you to assume this terrible body of a snake?

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa asked, "How did you get (*prāptaḥ*) this condemned body?" It suggests "Who did this?"

|| 10.34.12-13 ||

sarpa uvāca

ahaṁ vidyādharaḥ kaścit sudarśana iti śrutaḥ

śriyā svarūpa-sampattyā vimānenācaran diśaḥ

ṛṣīn virūpāṅgirāsaḥ prāhasaṁ rūpa-darpitaḥ

tair imāṁ prāpito yoniṁ pralabdhaiḥ svena pāpmanā

TRANSLATION

The serpent replied: I am the well-known Vidyādhara named Sudarśana. I was very opulent and beautiful, and I used to wander freely in all directions in my airplane. Once I saw some homely sages of the lineage of Aṅgirā Muni. Proud of my beauty, I ridiculed them, and because of my sin they made me assume this lowly form.

COMMENTARY

The serpent replied, "I was a well known (*śruta*) Vidyādhara named Sudarśana. I used go on pleasure excursions here and there (*diśaḥ ācaran*) in my airplane (*vimānena*). Overly conceited due to my beauty (*darpitaḥ-rūpa*), I laughed (*prāhasaṁ*) at some sages, and they cursed me to become a snake because of my sin (*svena pāpmanā*)."

|| 10.34.14 ||

śāpo me 'nugrahāyaiva kṛtas taiḥ karuṇātmabhiḥ

yad ahaṁ loka-guruṇā padā spṛṣṭo hatāśubhaḥ

TRANSLATION

It was actually for my benefit that those merciful sages cursed me, since now I have been touched by the foot of the supreme spiritual master of all the worlds and have thus been relieved of all inauspiciousness.

COMMENTARY

Sudarśana continued, "Because (*yat*) of this curse I have been touched by Your foot and attained the supreme benefit."

|| 10.34.15 ||

taṁ tvāhaṁ bhava-bhītānāṁ prapannānāṁ bhayāpaham

āpṛcche śāpa-nirmuktaḥ pāda-sparśād amīva-han

TRANSLATION

My Lord, You destroy all fear for those who, fearing this material world, take shelter of You. By the touch of Your feet I am now freed from the curse of the sages. O destroyer of distress, please let me return to my planet.

COMMENTARY

Sudarśana continued, "O destroyer of all distress (*amīva-han*)!" The word *āpṛcche* (I request) means that Sudarśana humbly begged for permission to go back to his own planet.

|| 10.34.16 ||

prapanno 'smi mahā-yogin mahā-puruṣa sat-pate

anujānīhi māṁ deva sarva-lokeśvareśvara

TRANSLATION

O master of mystic power, O great personality, O Lord of the devotees, I surrender to You. Please command me as You will, O supreme God, Lord of all lords of the universe.

COMMENTARY

Sudarśana continued, "O *mahā-yogi*, O greatest of all possessors of mystic power! On one hand I was a very envious serpent devouring your father. What has my position become now that I have regained proper discrimination and am praising You? How inconceivable is the mystic power of Your *yoga*!

"O Lord of the saintly persons (*sat-pate, satām:sādhūnām*) headed by Nanda Mahārāja and other great persons (*mahā-puruṣa*). This is a display of Your immeasurable mercy that You delivered me from this snake body, and protected Your own devotees. Know me (*anujānīhī*) to be one of Your followers."

|| 10.34.17 ||

brahma-daṇḍād vimukto ’haṁ sadyas te ’cyuta darśanāt

yan-nāma gṛhṇann akhilān śrotṝn ātmānam eva ca

sadyaḥ punāti kiṁ bhūyas tasya spṛṣṭaḥ padā hi te

TRANSLATION

O infallible one, I was immediately freed from the brāhmaṇas’ punishment simply by seeing You. Anyone who chants Your name purifies all who hear his chanting, as well as himself. How much more beneficial, then, is the touch of Your lotus feet?

COMMENTARY

Sudarśana continued, “Just by seeing You I became liberated from the snake body; what to speak of being touched by Your lotus foot? If just by a single chanting of Your holy name a person becomes purified, what should I attain, having seen You and been touched by Your lotus foot?”

|| 10.34.18 ||

ity anujñāpya dāśārhaṁ parikramyābhivandya ca

sudarśano divaṁ yātaḥ kṛcchrān nandaś ca mocitaḥ

TRANSLATION

Thus receiving the permission of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the demigod Sudarśana circumambulated Him, bowed down to offer Him homage and then returned to his heavenly planet. Nanda Mahārāja was thus delivered from peril.

|| 10.34.19 ||

niśāmya kṛṣṇasya tad ātma-vaibhavaṁ vrajaukaso vismita-cetasas tataḥ

samāpya tasmin niyamaṁ punar vrajaṁ ṇṛpāyayus tat kathayanta ādṛtāḥ

TRANSLATION

The inhabitants of Vraja were astonished to see the mighty power of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Dear King, they then completed their worship of Lord Śiva and returned to Vraja, along the way respectfully describing Kṛṣṇa’s powerful acts.

COMMENTARY

The inhabitants of Vraja were astonished at this and discussed among themselves: “Can this boy whom we fondle with affection, and who cannot be peaceful for a moment without us, be the Supreme Lord? If that is so, then all of us, mothers and fathers, are also great personalities. Thus we are greatly fortunate, as Garga Muni first told us that Kṛṣṇa is equal to Nārāyaṇa. Indeed, we have heard this from the mouths of both Varuṇa and the Vidy*ā*dhara.”

|| 10.34.20 ||

kadācid atha govindo rāmaś cādbhuta-vikramaḥ

vijahratur vane rātryāṁ madhya-gau vraja-yoṣitām

TRANSLATION

Once Lord Govinda and Lord Rāma, the performers of wonderful feats, were playing in the forest at night with the young girls of Vraja.

COMMENTARY

After observing the vow of Śiva-rātri, Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma and their friends met with the *gopīs* on the night of Holikā-pūrnimā (also known as Gaura-pūrṇimā) to celebrate Holī, according to *Śrī Vaiṣṇava-tośani*.

|| 10.34.21 ||

upagīyamānau lalitaṁ strī-janair baddha-sauhṛdaiḥ

sv-alaṅkṛtānuliptāṅgau sragvinau virajo-’mbarau

TRANSLATION

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma wore flower garlands and spotless garments, and Their limbs were beautifully decorated and anointed. The women sang Their glories in a charming way, bound to Them by affection.

|| 10.34.22 ||

niśā-mukhaṁ mānayantāv uditoḍupa-tārakam

mallikā-gandha-mattāli-juṣṭaṁ kumuda-vāyunā

TRANSLATION

The two Lords praised the nightfall, signaled by the rising of the moon and the appearance of stars, a lotus-scented breeze and bees intoxicated by the fragrance of jasmine flowers.

COMMENTARY

They honoured the beginning of night (*nisā-mukham: niśārambham*), which was fragrant with lotus-scented breezes (*kumuda-vāyunā*), served by the rising moon and stars, and by bees maddened from the fragrance of jasmine flowers.

|| 10.34.23 ||

jagatuḥ sarva-bhūtānāṁ manaḥ-śravaṇa-maṅgalam

tau kalpayantau yugapat svara-maṇḍala-mūrcchitam

TRANSLATION

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma sang, producing the entire range of musical sounds simultaneously. Their singing brought happiness to the ears and minds of all living beings.

COMMENTARY

Since they must be vibrated separately, it is impossible for other persons to produce all the musical tones simultaneously. Nevertheless, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were exhibiting at one time a melody consisting of the entire range of musical notes (*svara-maṇḍala-mūrcchitam*) in such a way as to create auspiciousness for the mind and the ears.

|| 10.34.24 ||

gopyas tad-gītam ākarṇya mūrcchitā nāvidan nṛpa

sraṁsad-dukūlam ātmānaṁ srasta-keśa-srajaṁ tataḥ

TRANSLATION

The gopīs became stunned when they heard that song. Forgetting themselves, O King, they did not notice that their fine garments were becoming loose and their hair and garlands disheveled.

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs* who were dear to Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma fainted on hearing those melodies. Such was their state that their clothing slipped from their bodies and flowers fell from their hair.

|| 10.34.25 ||

evaṁ vikrīḍatoḥ svairaṁ gāyatoḥ sampramatta-vat

śaṅkhacūḍa iti khyāto dhanadānucaro 'bhyagāt

TRANSLATION

While Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Balarāma thus played according to Their own sweet will and sang to the point of apparent intoxication, a servant of Kuvera named Śaṅkhacūḍa came upon the scene.

|| 10.34.26 ||

tayor nirīkṣato rājaṁs tan-nāthaṁ pramadā-janam

krośantaṁ kālayām āsa diśy udīcyām aśaṅkitaḥ

TRANSLATION

O King, even as the two Lords looked on, Śaṅkhacūḍa brazenly began driving the women off toward the north. The women, who had accepted Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma as their Lords, began to cry out to Them.

COMMENTARY

In front of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāmas' eyes, Śaṅkhacūda drove away the *gopīs*, who were shouting and crying "O Rāma, O Kṛṣṇa, please protect us." The demon whirled a big stick before the beautiful young girls, and drove them toward the north. But he did not actually touch the *gopīs*, as is corroborated by the following verse.

|| 10.34.27 ||

krośantaṁ kṛṣṇa rāmeti vilokya sva-parigraham

yathā gā dasyunā grastā bhrātarāv anvadhāvatām

TRANSLATION

Hearing Their devotees crying out "Kṛṣṇa! Rāma!" and seeing that they were just like cows being stolen by a thief, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma began to run after the demon.

COMMENTARY

As cowherds protect their cows from being taken by a thief (*dasyunā:caureṇa*), Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma pursued Śaṅkhacūda.

|| 10.34.28 ||

mā bhaiṣṭety abhayārāvau śāla-hastau tarasvinau

āsedatus taṁ tarasā tvaritaṁ guhyakādhamam

TRANSLATION

The Lords called out in reply, "Do not fear!" Then They picked up logs of the śala tree and quickly pursued that lowest of Guhyakas, who swiftly ran away.

|| 10.34.29 ||

sa vīkṣya tāv anuprāptau kāla-mṛtyū ivodvijan

viṣṛjya strī-janaṁ mūḍhaḥ prādravaj jīvitecchayā

TRANSLATION

When Śaṅkhacūḍa saw the two of Them coming toward him like the personified forces of Time and Death, he was filled with anxiety. Confused, he abandoned the women and fled for his life.

COMMENTARY

Like time (*kāla-mṛtyū*), the inspirer, and death (*mṛtyū*), the inspired, Balarāma, the inspirer, said, “Kill him quickly!” and Kṛṣṇa, the inspired, said, “Yes I will kill him.”

|| 10.34.30 ||

tam anvadhāvad govindo yatra yatra sa dhāvati

jihīrṣus tac-chiro-ratnaṁ tasthau rakṣan striyo balaḥ

TRANSLATION

Lord Govinda chased the demon wherever he ran, eager to take his crest jewel. Meanwhile Lord Balarāma stayed with the women to protect them.

COMMENTARY

Balarāma stayed with the *gopīs*, who were tired from running, to comfort and protect them as they rested.

|| 10.34.31 ||

avidūra ivābhyetya śiras tasya durātmanaḥ

jahāra muṣṭinaivāṅga saha-cūḍa-maṇiṁ vibhuḥ

TRANSLATION

The mighty Lord overtook Śaṅkhacūḍa from a great distance as if from nearby, my dear King, and then with His fist the Lord removed the wicked demon’s head, together with his crest jewel.

COMMENTARY

Though the demon was very far away, in a moment Kṛṣṇa caught up to Śaṅkhachūḍa and decapitated the demon with His fist.

|| 10.34.32 ||

śaṅkhacūḍaṁ nihatyaivaṁ maṇim ādāya bhāsvaram

agrajāyādadāt prītyā paśyantīnāṁ ca yoṣitām

TRANSLATION

Having thus killed the demon Śaṅkhacūḍa and taken away his shining jewel, Lord Kṛṣṇa gave it to His elder brother with great satisfaction as the gopīs watched.

COMMENTARY

To prevent rivalry among the *gopīs*, who were thinking "Kṛṣṇa will give the jewel to me because I am the most favorite," Kṛṣṇa happily gave the jewel to Balarāma. However, later, Balarāma gave the effulgent jewel to Rādhā, the most favored object of Kṛṣṇa's affection.

Thus ends the commentary on the Thirty Fourth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Thirty-five

The Gopīs Sing of Kṛṣṇa as He Wanders in the Forest (*Yugala-gītā*)

|| 10.35.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

gopyaḥ kṛṣṇe vanaṁ yāte tam anudruta-cetasaḥ

kṛṣṇa-līlāḥ pragāyantyo ninyur duḥkhena vāsarān

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Whenever Kṛṣṇa went to the forest, the minds of the gopīs would run after Him, and thus the young girls sadly spent their days singing of His pastimes.

COMMENTARY

In this chapter, the *gopīs*, pining in separation from Kṛṣṇa, spend their days remembering Him by reciting twelve pairs of verses known as the Yugala-gītā.

The *gopīs*' *prema*, in order to nourish itself, divided itself into two parts: the coolness of direct enjoyment with Kṛṣṇa in the moonlight, and the heat of separation from Him in the day time. The *gopīs* spent their nights as previously described, directly associating with Kṛṣṇa by singing and dancing, conversing, kissing and relishing conjugal *rasa*. In the daytime, they could only associate with Kṛṣṇa by thinking of Him. Drinking the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's flute song, the *gopīs* became immersed in the *rasa* of separation. When

Kṛṣṇa went to the forest to herd the cows, the *gopīs*' minds chased after Him (*tam anudruta-cetasaḥ*).

|| 10.35.2-3 ||

śrī-gopya ūcuḥ

vāma-bāhu-kṛta-vāma-kapolo valgita-bhrur adharārpita-veṇum

komalāṅgulibhir āśrita-mārgaṁ gopya īrayati yatra mukundaḥ

vyoma-yāna-vanitāḥ saha siddhair vismitās tad upadhārya sa-lajjāḥ

kāma-mārgaṇa-samarpita-cittāḥ kaśmalaṁ yayur apasmṛta-nīvyaḥ

TRANSLATION

The gopīs said: When Mukunda vibrates the flute He has placed to His lips, stopping its holes with His tender fingers, He rests His left cheek on His left arm and makes His eyebrows dance. At that time the demigoddesses traveling in the sky with their husbands, the Siddhas, become amazed. As those ladies listen, they are embarrassed to find their minds yielding to the pursuit of lusty desires, and in their distress they are unaware that the belts of their garments are loosening.

COMMENTARY

While herding His cows in the Vṛndāvana forest, Kṛṣṇa played His flute to announce His arrival and to console the trees, creepers, birds and beasts suffering in separation from Him. The *gopīs*, overwhelmed in waves of ecstasy from hearing that flute sound, spoke to their friends in twelve pairs of verses.

Kṛṣṇa rested His left cheek on His left shoulder in order to play the *gamakas* (vibrato) in the ascending and descending modes of the *rāgas*. At that time Kṛṣṇa placed His right shank over His left shank to assume a charming three-fold bending form, which enchanted the three worlds. Kṛṣṇa tilted His neck, rested the flute on His lower lip, and made His eyebrows dance to attract the attention of Subala and others to the skillfulness of His songs. What type of flute was it? It was equipped with seven holes which were covered by Kṛṣṇa's fingers. Because Kṛṣṇa never worked, His lotus petal-like fingers were softer than those of other men, but they were somewhat harder than His other limbs.

The wives of the Siddhas flying in the sky, though accompanied by their husbands, became astonished upon hearing the sound of the flute. "We have never heard such enchanting flute playing before, which totally bewilders us, even though we are chaste

ladies!” Their husbands thought, “Even though we are men, this flute bewilders us too, and makes us assume the mentality of women.”

The celestial women became embarrassed in the presence of their husbands and thought, “Our husbands, seeing our agitation, will have doubts about us.” The husbands on the other hand became embarrassed, thinking, “Having given up our male identity and adopted female identities, our wives will have doubts about us.”

The celestial ladies and their husbands the Siddhas then succumbed to the arrows of lust. Seeing the arrows of love for Kṛṣṇa approaching quickly the wives said, “O arrows of love for Kṛṣṇa! Quickly pierce these hearts which have been offered to you. Let us give up our faithfulness to our husbands and let Kṛṣṇa enjoy with us!” The husbands said, “As we have given up our manhood and our status as demigods, immediately turn us into *gopīs* and enjoy with us.’’ Both the women and their husbands became stunned due to the torment of the arrows of lust. The same feelings appeared in both parties at once. Therefore, the women’s belts became loosened without their knowing, and the men’s clothes and hair became loose without their knowing.

Thus the *gopīs* imply, “If the demigoddesses and even the demigods reach such an unprecedented state, then why are we, who are human beings, and moreover cowherd girls living with Kṛṣṇa in the same village, and who have already had His intimate association, standing here without His company? Therefore, my dear sakhīs, even while our husbands and relatives watch and scold us, let us enter the forest of Vṛndāvana and enjoy with the beloved of our lives.” This is the implication at the end of each pair of verses.

|| 10.35.4-5 ||

hanta citram abalāḥ śṛṇutedaṁ hāra-hāsa urasi sthira-vidyut

nanda-sūnur ayam ārta-janānāṁ narma-do yarhi kūjita-veṇuḥ

vṛndaśo vraja-vṛṣā mṛga-gāvo veṇu-vādya-hṛta-cetasa ārāt

danta-daṣṭa-kavalā dhṛta-karṇā nidritā likhita-citram ivāsan

TRANSLATION

O girls! This son of Nanda, who gives joy to the distressed, bears steady lightning on His chest and has a smile like a jeweled necklace. Now please hear something wonderful. When He vibrates His flute, Vraja’s bulls, deer and cows, standing in groups at a great distance, are all captivated by the sound, and they stop chewing the food in their mouths and cock their ears. Stunned, they appear as if asleep, or like figures in a painting.

COMMENTARY

What to speak of the intelligent wives of the demigods, who are the most expert practitioners of social niceties, even the foolish animals became completely captivated by Kṛṣṇa's flute.

Another *gopī* spoke, "Ah, this is wonderful, more amazing than the most amazing thing! O weak girls (*abalāḥ*)! From the very beginning, Kṛṣṇa has stolen the strength of your chastity toward your husbands. On Kṛṣṇa's cloud-like chest, effulgent with a pearl necklace resembling a row of flying cranes, flashes the golden line of Laksmī like stationary lightning. O *gopīs*, the sunlight of your faithfulness toward your husbands has become obscured by that cloud of Kṛṣṇa's chest with its lightning and flying cranes. Kṛṣṇa makes you who are suffering become the object of ridicule for society."

"How does He do this? Kṛṣṇa does this simply by vibrating His flute (*kūjita-veṇuḥ*). When you hear the seductive song of Kṛṣṇa's flute, the knots of your undergarments loosen and the garlands in your hair fall down. You then attain the state of *unmāda* (madness in love) and become the objects of everyone's ridicule."

"What to speak of humans like us; even dumb animals become stunned by the vibration of Kṛṣṇa's flute. When the bulls, cows and forest animals hear the sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute they become stunned, and cannot swallow the grass that they are chewing. The sound of the flute steals their minds and stops the functioning of their senses so that they appear as if asleep. The chewed grass remains in their mouths without falling to the ground. As the *sañcārī-bhāva* of *jāḍya* (being stunned) becomes even stronger, they become completely immobilized and their breathing almost stops. Then rather than appearing like statues, they look like painted pictures. This gives rise to the mellow of wonder or amazement known as *adbhuta-rasa*."

|| 10.35.6-7 ||

barhiṇa-stabaka-dhātu-palāśair baddha-malla-paribarha-viḍambaḥ

karhicit sa-bala āli sa gopair gāḥ samāhvayati yatra mukundaḥ

tarhi bhagna-gatayaḥ sarito vai tat-padāmbuja-rajo 'nila-nītam

spṛhayatīr vayam ivābahu-puṇyāḥ prema-vepita-bhujāḥ stimitāpaḥ

TRANSLATION

My dear gopī, sometimes Mukunda imitates the appearance of a wrestler by decorating Himself with leaves, peacock feathers and colored minerals. Then, in the company of Balarāma and the cowherd boys, He plays His flute to call the cows. At that time the rivers stop flowing, their water stunned by the ecstasy they feel as they eagerly wait for the wind to bring them the dust of His lotus feet. But like us, the rivers are not very pious, and thus they merely wait with their arms trembling out of love.

COMMENTARY

In this verse the *gopīs* state, "What to speak of conscious beings such as the bulls and deer, even the unconscious entities become stunned on hearing Kṛṣṇa's flute."

One other *gopī* spoke, "When Mukunda is decorated with mineral powders such as red earth and leaves, peacock feathers, or peacock feathers and flowers, He imitates the attire of wrestlers yet mocks them with His incomparably brilliant beauty. When Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma and the cowherd boys call the cows by name, 'Oh Kālindī, Gaṅge, Sarasvatī!' then rivers such as the Yamunā, Mānasa Gaṅgā, Sarasvatī and others in Vraja, even though they are unconscious, attain consciousness, thinking, 'Oh, what good fortune we have! Kṛṣṇa is calling us in order to bathe and dive in our waters. Let us break our banks with strong currents and flow towards Him.' Though desiring in this way, because of being stunned with bliss, their natural movement is checked and their currents stop flowing."

The hidden implication of the phrase *bhagna-gatayaḥ* (broken movement) is that the rivers' worldly progress was spoiled (*bhagna*) because of failing to attain the happiness of physical association with Kṛṣṇa, and because they became the laughing stock of other rivers. Their progress in the next life was also spoiled because of transgressing the vows of chastity to their husbands (the ocean). Just see the misfortune of these rivers!

"But this is to some extent good fortune also that the rivers were hankering for the dust of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, which was carried to them by a favorable breeze. But even after attaining it, they cannot be satisfied and desire more. Like us *gopīs* who sometimes get Kṛṣṇa's association and sometimes are deprived of it, the rivers do not have bad fortune, but have only a little good fortune (*ābahu-puṇyāḥ*)."

"The waves (arms) of the river shake out of love, just as our arms also tremble with *prema*. Though their waters become solidified (*stimita-āpaḥ*) because of being stunned, again they liquefy. We also experience the water in our eyes drying up and solidifying, just like one who is lighting a sacrificial fire experiences his eyes drying up from the fire. In the same way, our movements were checked by our husbands, brothers and other relatives who prevented us from meeting Kṛṣṇa, and thus we have lost our goal in life.

Because of being ridiculed by the general populace, and for transgressing the rules of chastity, we have lost our fame and the chances for our future lives also. Like the rivers, we also hanker for the dust from Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet."

|| 10.35.8-11 ||

anucaraiḥ samanuvarṇita-vīrya ādi-pūruṣa ivācala-bhūtiḥ

vana-caro giri-taṭeṣu carantīr veṇunāhvayati gāḥ sa yadā hi

vana-latās tarava ātmani viṣṇuṁ vyañjayantya iva puṣpa-phalāḍhyāḥ

praṇata-bhāra-viṭapā madhu-dhārāḥ prema-hṛṣṭa-tanavo vavṛṣuḥ sma

darśanīya-tilako vana-mālā-divya-gandha-tulasī-madhu-mattaiḥ

ali-kulair alaghu gītām abhīṣṭam ādriyan yarhi sandhita-veṇuḥ

sarasi sārāsa-haṁsa-vihaṅgāś cāru-gītā-hṛta-cetasa etya

harim upāsata te yata-cittā hanta mīlita-dṛśo dhṛta-maunāḥ

TRANSLATION

Kṛṣṇa moves about the forest in the company of His friends, who vividly chant the glories of His magnificent deeds. He thus appears just like the Supreme Personality of Godhead exhibiting His inexhaustible opulences. When the cows wander onto the mountainsides and Kṛṣṇa calls out to them with the sound of His flute, the trees and creepers in the forest respond by becoming so luxuriant with fruits and flowers that they seem to be manifesting Lord Viṣṇu within their hearts. As their branches bend low with the weight, the filaments on their trunks and vines stand erect out of the ecstasy of love of God, and both the trees and the creepers pour down a rain of sweet sap.

Maddened by the divine, honeylike aroma of the tulasī flowers on the garland Kṛṣṇa wears, swarms of bees sing loudly for Him, and that most beautiful of all persons thankfully acknowledges and acclaims their song by taking His flute to His lips and playing it. The charming flute song then steals away the minds of the cranes, swans and other lake-dwelling birds. Indeed they approach Kṛṣṇa, close their eyes and, maintaining strict silence, worship Him by fixing their consciousness upon Him in deep meditation.

COMMENTARY

(Text 8-9) “It is natural that the rivers should react in this way, because although they are unconscious, they are eternally perfect beings in the form of demigods. But just see how even the most dull entities like trees who have taken a low birth due to their previous *karma* relish transcendental mellows from hearing Kṛṣṇa’s flute.” In this way another group of *gopīs* spoke.

“Although Kṛṣṇa is endowed with unchanging opulence (*ācala-vibhūtiḥ*) similar to Nārāyaṇa (*ādi-pūruṣa*), nonetheless He wanders through the forest with His cowherd boyfriends because of His affection for the living entities dwelling there. At that time, just as household Vaiṣṇavas and their wives become ecstatic when they hear a *sankirtana* party approaching and offer obeisances, similarly the creepers of the forest, who are female, and the trees, who are their husbands, bowed low with their branches and vines, as if revealing Lord Viṣṇu within their minds. They weep abundant tears in the form of streams of honey.

“The trees appeared beautiful, rich with flowers and fruits. The flowers represent the *sañcārī-bhāva* of “joy,” and the fruits represent the *sthāyī-bhāva* called *rātī*. Their completely bent branches indicate the *anubhāva* of paying obeisances. The statement that the filaments on their trunks and vines stand erect out of ecstatic love indicates the *sāttvika-bhāva* of *romāñca* (ecstatic symptom of hair standing on end).”

(Text 10-11) After describing the Vaiṣṇava status of the trees and creepers, like that of *grhastha* devotees who are still attached to the pleasures of household life, the *gopīs* describe the swans and cranes as self-satisfied sages (*ātmārāmas*) worshiping Viṣṇu upon hearing His flute.

Kṛṣṇa wore attractive *tilaka* markings (*darśanīya-tilakaḥ*) made from red mineral clays. The phrase can also mean that Kṛṣṇa is like the *tilaka* of all extremely beautiful persons worth seeing. Kṛṣṇa wore a vaijayanti flower garland with flowers of five different colors interspersed with divinely fragrant tulasī, whose honey was sought by greedy bees, humming loudly (*alaghu:uccaiḥ*) due to intoxication (*mattaiḥ*).

There may be an objection. Usually lotus, jasmine and *nāga-keśara* flowers are described as fragrant by ordinary people. Though the glories of *tulasī* are much greater, she is not normally considered an especially fragrant plant. The objection is answered as follows. Ordinary people cannot perceive *tulasī’s* fragrance, but early in the morning spiritually advanced persons can experience her fragrance as greater than that of the lotus. The bees who are privileged to swarm about the flower garlands on Kṛṣṇa’s neck certainly appreciate this fragrance. Actually the most sublime fragrance of *tulasī* is only fully appreciable to the superexcellent and most perfect sense of smell of Kṛṣṇa Himself. By the covering of *yogamāyā*, *tulasi*’s fragrance cannot be appreciated by anyone else.

The *Bhāgavatam* explains that the most fragrant plants in Vaikuṇṭha also appreciate the special qualifications of Tulasī-devī.

mandāra-kunda-kurabotpala-campakārṇa-

punnāga-nāga-bakulāmbuja-pārijātāḥ

gandhe ’rcite tulasikābharaṇena tasyā

yasmiṁs tapaḥ sumanaso bahu mānayanti

> “Although flowering plants like the *mandāra, kunda, kurabaka, utpala, campaka, arṇa, punnāga, nāga-keśara, bakula, lily* and *pārijāta* are full of transcendental fragrance, they are still conscious of the austerities performed by *tulasī*, for *tulasī* is given special preference by the Lord, who garlands Himself with *tulasī* leaves.” (SB 3.15.19)

The word *abhīṣṭam* (desirable) indicates that when Kṛṣṇa thought about what pitch He would play on His flute, the bees would buzz, and Kṛṣṇa would thankfully acknowledge (*ādriyan*) them, “Excellent, excellent, My dear bees, I see this is the correct note,” and play His flute according to that pitch.

The word *sandhita-veṇuḥ* means that Śrī Kṛṣṇa placed His flute firmly upon His lips. The melody emanating from that flute was certainly the most enchanting of sounds, as the *gopīs* describe in this chapter. Hearing that sweet song, the water birds left the lakes, approached Kṛṣṇa, and worshiped the Lord by looking at Him, listening and meditating on Him. The phrase *mīlita-dṛśaḥ*, “they closed their eyes” indicates the birds were absorbed in the rapture of relishing *rasa*. Closing one’s eyes due to relishing transcendental mellows is an *anubhāva*, a sign of ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.35.12-13 ||

saha-balaḥ srag-avataṁsa-vilāsaḥ sānuṣu kṣiti-bhṛto vraja-devyaḥ

harṣayan yarhi veṇu-raveṇa jāta-harṣa uparambhati viśvam

mahad-atikramaṇa-śaṅkita-cetā manda-mandam anugarjati meghaḥ

suhṛdam abhyavarṣat sumanobhiś chāyayā ca vidadhat pratapatram

TRANSLATION

O goddesses of Vraja, when Kṛṣṇa is enjoying Himself with Balarāma on the mountain slopes, playfully wearing a flower garland on the top of His head, He engladdens all with the resonant vibrations of His flute. Thus He delights the entire world. At that time the nearby cloud, afraid of offending a great personality, thunders very gently in accompaniment. The cloud showers flowers onto his dear friend Kṛṣṇa and shades Him from the sun like an umbrella.

COMMENTARY

Having described the joy the conscious and unconscious entities on the earth felt from hearing the flute, the *gopīs* now describe the bliss of the unconscious entities in the sky.

Saha-balaḥ means accompanied by Balarāma and a troop of cowherd boys. Kṛṣṇa looked gorgeous as He playfully draped garlands on the top of His head, on His chest, and as ornaments over His ears. Kṛṣṇa stood on the slope of a mountain, and joyfully vibrated His flute to inundate the universe with bliss.

The clouds in the sky began to rumble gently, so that their sound would not disrupt the great cloud of Kṛṣṇa. The thundering of the clouds blended favorably with the flute sound, not disturbing it in any way. The cloud was a dear friend (*suhṛdam*) of Kṛṣṇa, because both are of dark color and act to remove people's distress. The cloud then sprinkled fine particles of ice, which were just like tiny flowers, and made an umbrella (*pratapatram*) from its own shadow to relieve his friend from the scorching heat of the sun. *Pratapatram* means that which delivers (*trāyate*) one from intense heat (*pra-tapa*).

Here we can understand that Kṛṣṇa is the cloud standing on the slope of the mountain. His garland and earrings are the cranes flying in the sky, His yellow *dhotī* is the lightning, and the song of His flute is the rain showering the essence of delicious nectar.

|| 10.35.14-15 ||

vividha-gopa-caraṇeṣu vidagdho veṇu-vādya urudhā nija-śikṣāḥ

tava sutaḥ sati yadādhara-bimbe datta-veṇur anayat svara-jātīḥ

savanaśas tad upadhārya sureśāḥ śakra-śarva-parameṣṭhi-purogāḥ

kavaya ānata-kandhara-cittāḥ kaśmalaṁ yayur aniścita-tattvāḥ

TRANSLATION

O pious mother Yaśodā, your son, who is expert in all the arts of herding cows, has invented many new styles of flute-playing. When He takes His flute to His bimba-red lips and sends forth the tones of the harmonic scale in variegated melodies, Brahmā, Śiva, Indra and other chief demigods become confused upon hearing the sound. Although they are the most learned authorities, they cannot ascertain the essence of that music, and thus they bow down their heads and hearts.

COMMENTARY

Late in the afternoon, some *gopīs* presented logical reasons why their beloved, who was supposed to be returning to Vraja at this time, had remained absent from their sight for so long. On some pretext they went to mother Yaśodā's house and mixed with the elders, young girls and children to talk about Kṛṣṇa's transcendental qualities, activities and power. Mother Yaśodā listened intently and also related numerous pastimes of her darling son. In order to pacify Yaśodā, who was becoming overwhelmed with separation from Kṛṣṇa, and also to appease their own minds, the *gopīs* told her about the power of Kṛṣṇa's flute song in this verse.

The *gopīs* said, "O Yaśodā, your son is expert at herding the cows, caring for them and milking them. He holds the flute to His cherry red lips and plays the tones of the harmonic scale in variegated melodies, which were all self-taught. When all the demigods led by *śakra* (Lord Indra) such as Upendra, Agni and Yamarāja, and those led by *śarva* (Lord Śiva) such as Kātyāyani, Skanda and Gaṇeśa, and those led by *parameṣṭhi* (Lord Brahmā) such as the four Kumāras and Nārada, as well as the best composers of songs, hear that song and taste its sweetness, they bow down their necks and minds. Incapable of comprehending the *rāga* and *tāla*, they become completely bewildered by the dulcet flute song and lose their ability to understand the real identity of the musical scales. If such illustrious demigods become bewildered, then what can we say of ordinary mortals? In this way, your son bewilders the whole universe."

|| 10.35.16-17 ||

nija-padābja-dalair dhvaja-vajra nīrajāṅkuśa-vicitra-lalāmaiḥ

vraja-bhuvaḥ śamāyān khura-todaṁ varṣma-dhurya-gatir īḍita-veṇuḥ

vrajati tena vayaṁ sa-vilāsa vīkṣaṇārpita-manobhava-vegāḥ

kuja-gatiṁ gamitā na vidāmaḥ kaśmalena kavaraṁ vasanaṁ vā

TRANSLATION

As Kṛṣṇa strolls through Vraja with His lotus-petal-like feet, marking the ground with the distinctive emblems of flag, thunderbolt, lotus and elephant goad, He relieves the distress the ground feels from the cows' hooves. As He plays His renowned flute, His body moves with the grace of an elephant. Thus we gopīs, who become agitated by Cupid when Kṛṣṇa playfully glances at us, stand as still as trees, unaware that our hair and garments are slackening.

COMMENTARY

In these verses, the gopīs are no longer in the company of mother yaśodā, so they freely describe their confidential conjugal attraction to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

The gopīs said, "The soft touch of Kṛṣṇa's lotus petal feet, marked with a conch, flag and goad pacifies mother earth from the pain she feels from the hooves of the cows returning to vraja in the late afternoon. As Kṛṣṇa walks by with the gait of a maddened elephant, He agitates our hearts with lust by His playful glances, and thus we become stunned and immobilized like the trees. In our bewilderment we fail to notice that the garlands in our hair and our garments are slipping off. On one hand Kṛṣṇa removes the distress of the earth, but for us, the beautiful-browed *gopīs* of Vraja, He agitates our minds by glancing at us with His beautiful lotus eyes. Such is our misfortune."

|| 10.35.18-19 ||

maṇi-dharaḥ kvacid āgaṇayan gā mālayā dayita-gandha-tulasyāḥ

praṇayino 'nucarasya kadāṁse prakṣipan bhujam agāyata yatra

kvaṇita-veṇu-rava-vañcita-cittāḥ kṛṣṇam anvasata kṛṣṇa-gṛhiṇyaḥ

guṇa-gaṇārṇam anugatya hariṇyo gopīkā iva vimukta-gṛhāśāḥ

TRANSLATION

Now Kṛṣṇa is standing somewhere counting His cows on a string of gems. He wears a garland of tulasī flowers that bear the fragrance of His beloved, and He has thrown His arm over the shoulder of an affectionate cowherd boyfriend. As Kṛṣṇa plays His flute and sings, the music attracts the black deer's wives, who approach that ocean of transcendental qualities and sit down beside Him. Just like us cowherd girls, they have given up all hope for happiness in family life.

COMMENTARY

In this verse the *gopīs* describe the bewilderment of the deer in the forest upon hearing Kṛṣṇa's flute, which is similar to the bewilderment they experience while remaining in the village.

For each of the four colors of cows—white, red, black and yellow—there are twenty-five subdivisions, making a total of one hundred colors. Such qualities as being colored like sandalwood-pulp *tilaka* [speckled] or having a head shaped like a *mṛdaṅga* drum create eight further groups. To count these 108 groups of cows, distingui-shed by color and form, Kṛṣṇa uses a string of 108 jewel-beads.

Thus when Kṛṣṇa calls out "Hey Dhavalī," [the name of a white cow], a whole group of white cows come forward, and when He calls "Hamsī, Candanī, Gaṅgā, Muktā" and so on, the twenty-four other groups of white cows come. The reddish cows are called Aruṇī, Kuṇkuma and Sarasvatī; the blackish ones: Śyāmalā, Dhūmalā and Yamunā, and the yellowish ones: Pitā, Piṅgalā and Haritālikā. Those in the group with *tilaka* marks on their foreheads are called Citritā, Citra-tilakā, Dīrgha-tilakā and Tiryak-tilakā, and there are groups known as Mṛdaṅga-mukhī [*mṛdaṅga*-head], Siṁha-mukhī [lion-head] and so on.

The *gopīs* said, "Thus being called by their names, the cows came forward, and in this way Kṛṣṇa would not forget even one of them. He also wears a *tulasī* garland bearing the fragrance of His beloved. Leaning on the shoulder of a friend, Kṛṣṇa plays His flute, and that sound steals the hearts of the female black deer and brings them near Him, the ocean of all transcendental qualities. These deer have given up their hopes for family life, just like us cowherd girls.

|| 10.35.20-21 ||

kunda-dāma-kṛta-kautuka-veṣo gopa-godhana-vṛto yamunāyām

nanda-sūnur anaghe tava vatso narma-daḥ praṇayiṇāṁ vijahāra

manda-vāyur upavāty anukūlaṁ mānayan malayaja-sparśena

vandinas tam upadeva-gaṇā ye vādya-gīta-balibhiḥ parivavruḥ

TRANSLATION

O sinless Yaśodā, your darling child, the son of Mahārāja Nanda, has festively enhanced His attire with a jasmine garland, and He is now playing along the

Yamunā in the company of the cows and cowherd boys, amusing His dear companions. The gentle breeze honors Him with its soothing fragrance of sandalwood, while the various Upadevas, standing on all sides like panegyrists, offer their music, singing and gifts of tribute.

COMMENTARY

When the *gopīs* assembled at mother Yaśodā's house in the afternoon they saw that she was disturbed over Kṛṣṇa's late return, so they pacified Yaśodā by telling her the reason for Kṛṣṇa's delay in this verse.

The *gopīs* said, "After bathing in the Yamunā to relieve His fatigue, Kṛṣṇa sat down on her bank and dressed in a festive way to please His cowherd boyfriends, who were eagerly waiting to meet Him. A gentle breeze blew to refresh Kṛṣṇa as He played in the water with His foot. To engladden His friends Kṛṣṇa told jokes and listened to theirs.

"O sinless Yaśodā, you never committed any sins previously or in this life, by which danger could come to your son. Why do you, who are endowed with the most spotless fame (*yaśodā*), uselessly worry about danger from demons if Kṛṣṇa is a little late? He is the son of Nanda, who is famous as the crest-jewel of all pious men, and He is your darling son (*vatsa*, object of affection). We see that children fall into danger only when the parents have bad *karma*. Therefore no danger can befall your son.

"Listen as we tell you the reason for Kṛṣṇa's being late as we have heard it from His friends. The wind, which has acquired its fine fragrance and coolness by touching the sandalwood trees growing on the Malaya Hill, is blowing very pleasantly to honor your son. The Upadevas (minor demigods) like the Gandharvas [famous for their celestial music and dancing] have surrounded Kṛṣṇa and are worshipping Him by playing musical instruments and praising His qualities. In order to acknowledge them, Kṛṣṇa is delaying a bit according to the logic that "Those of quality delight in seeing persons with good qualities." Therefore there is no need to worry about your son. Actually it is your great fortune that the Upadevas are honoring your son in this manner."

|| 10.35.22-23 ||

vatsalo vraja-gavāṁ yad aga-dhro vandyamāna-caraṇaḥ pathi vṛddhaiḥ

kṛtsna-go-dhanam upohya dinānte gīta-veṇur anugeḍita-kīrtiḥ

utsavaṁ śrama-rucāpi dṛśīnām unnayan khura-rajaś-churita-srak

ditsayaiti suhṛd-āsiṣa eṣa devakī-jaṭhara-bhūr uḍu-rājaḥ

TRANSLATION

Out of great affection for the cows of Vraja, Kṛṣṇa became the lifter of Govardhana Hill. At the end of the day, having rounded up all His own cows, He plays a song on His flute, while exalted demigods standing along the path worship His lotus feet and the cowherd boys accompanying Him chant His glories. His garland is powdered by the dust raised by the cows' hooves, and His beauty, enhanced by His fatigue, creates an ecstatic festival for everyone's eyes. Eager to fulfill His friends' desires, Kṛṣṇa is the moon arisen from the womb of mother Yaśodā.

COMMENTARY

"Seeing that my son, who is so eager to play, has not come back at the end of twilight, I will now kill myself." Fearing such a response from mother Yaśodā, the *gopīs* try to console her by giving reasons why Kṛṣṇa will come quickly in this verse.

The *gopīs* said, "Kṛṣṇa is affectionately remembering how the bulls and the calves tied up in Vraja are suffering in separation from Him, so He will quickly come back, even at the risk of neglecting the Gandharvas and other demigods. One cannot say that for a cowherd boy like Kṛṣṇa the expert singing of such extremely insignificant singers as these Gandharvas is more attractive than seeing the cows, feeding them grass, touching them and scratching their necks. Kṛṣṇa showed how much affection He has for His cows by lifting Govardhana Hill just to protect them. Though the Gandharvas may have heaps of good qualities, Kṛṣṇa has not even a trace of affection for them."

Mother Yaśodā replied, "If that is so, then by this time Kṛṣṇa should have returned home."

Replying to that objection, the *gopīs* present yet another reason for Kṛṣṇa's delay: "Brahmā, Śiva, Indra and other chief demigods are now offering their respects to your son while standing along the path. Attracted by the sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute, the demigods come from their own abodes and remain all day in the sky watching Kṛṣṇa in great bliss. When Kṛṣṇa returns to Vraja in the evening, the demigods also return to their celestial abodes, but not before descending to earth to worship the lotus feet of your son in order to obtain His mercy. What can Kṛṣṇa do in this circumstance? Kṛṣṇa's extended delay is caused by His taking time to bless the demigods. Why don't you see your own great fortune, that the feet of your son are being honoured even by Brahmā, Śiva and the other chief demigods? Therefore, why are you so distressed?"

In a tearful choking voice, Yaśodā said, “O, dear young girls of Vraja! Please run to the watch-towers and tell me how far away my son is?”

On Yaśodā’s order the tallest of the beautiful young *gopīs* climbed up the watchtower to see when Kṛṣṇa would arrive. She said, “Kṛṣṇa is now coming home to fulfill the desires of His well wishers. With the sweet sound of His flute He has collected all the cows in one place. The fatigue of cow herding has brilliantly enhanced Kṛṣṇa’s beautiful form. His garland is sprinkled with the dust raised by the cows’ hooves. Indeed, seeing Kṛṣṇa in this way creates a festival (*utsavam*) of ecstasy for the eyes of the entire world.”

Beyond the perception of Yaśodā, the *gopī* hints here that Kṛṣṇa is casting love-filled sidelong glances toward His intimate girl friends. Though dust is mentioned in relation to Kṛṣṇa’s garland, there was no dust anywhere else on His body because His friends repeatedly wiped off the dust with their own *chādars*. There was some dust on Kṛṣṇa’s garland, however, because the boys were afraid of breaking the petals so they did not remove the dust completely.

Kṛṣṇa did not discard this garland even though it had become dirtied, and neither did He put on a new garland which a servant kept ready in the fold of his cloth. This indicates that Kṛṣṇa wanted very much to exhibit this favorite garland hanging from His neck because it was fashioned by His beloved Rādhikā with Her own hands and given to Him in the forest by one of Her *sakhīs*.

The word *devakī* in the phrase *devakī jaṭhara* (womb) refers to Yaśodā. Kṛṣṇa appeared like the moon (*udu-raja*) rising from the milk ocean of Yaśodā’s womb. In *Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Gaṇodeśa Dīpikā*, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī cites the *Ādi Purāṇa* which states that Nanda Mahārāja’s wife had two names: Devakī and Yaśodā.

|| 10.35.24-25 ||

mada-vighūrṇita-locana īṣat māna-daḥ sva-suhṛdāṁ vana-mālī

badara-pāṇḍu-vadano mṛdu-gaṇḍaṁ maṇḍayan kanaka-kuṇḍala-lakṣmyā

yadu-patir dvirada-rāja-vihāro yāminī-patir ivaiṣa dinānte

mudita-vaktra upayāti durantaṁ mocayan vraja-gavāṁ dina-tāpam

TRANSLATION

As Kṛṣṇa respectfully greets His well-wishing friends, His eyes roll slightly as if from intoxication. He wears a flower garland, and the beauty of His soft cheeks is accentuated by the brilliance of His golden earrings and the whiteness of His face, which has the color of a badara berry. With His cheerful face resembling the moon, lord of the night, the Lord of the Yadus moves with the grace of a regal elephant. Thus He returns in the evening, delivering the cows of Vraja from the heat of the day.

COMMENTARY

In this verse the *gopīs* say, "Please hear the reason why even now, as Kṛṣṇa reaches the outskirts of the town, He is a little delayed."

Kṛṣṇa eyes are rolling about in intoxication due to the bliss of seeing His father and other loved ones, or due to the love generated from seeing His beloved *gopīs*. The first meaning is for those in the mood of parental affection (*vātsalya-rasa*), and the second meaning is for those in the mood of conjugal love (*mādhurya-rasa*). This will be understood from a later description.

The *gopīs* said, "To His own well wishers (*sva-suhṛdāṁ*) such as His family priests, maternal grandparents, brothers, servants, and betel-nut bearers, who are each greeting Kṛṣṇa and giving benedictions according to his position, Kṛṣṇa shows only slight respect by nodding His head, since, though a prince, He is still young and not obliged to strictly follow the etiquette according to scriptural rules (*Nīti-śāstra*). This is another reason for His delay."

The phrase *sva-suhṛdāṁ* (well wishers) can also refer to Kṛṣṇa's beloved girlfriends, who have climbed up the watchtowers to worship Him with the blue lotuses of their smiling sidelong glances. Unseen by others, Kṛṣṇa honored (*māna-daḥ*) the *gopīs* with sidelong glances signifying that He would soon fulfill their desires.

Kṛṣṇa's face was slightly flushed like a ripe *badarī* fruit, due to thirst, hunger and fatigue from wandering in the forest. Or Kṛṣṇa's face was flushed due to experiencing prolonged separation from His dear *gopīs*. This is an *anubhāva*, a symptom of ecstasy. His tender cheeks were illuminated with the effulgence of His trembling golden earrings.

Kṛṣṇa is addressed as the Lord of the Yadus (*yadu-patir*), which here means Lord of the cowherd men. Previously in chapter five, verse twenty it was explained that the cowherds are Yadavas. Kṛṣṇa walked slowly like the king of the elephants. The word *gavām* refers to cows or senses. Thus as Kṛṣṇa, His face blossoming with joy, came

closer He relieved the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana from the distress their eyes and other senses felt in separation from Him during the day.

|| 10.35.26 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

evaṁ vraja-striyo rājan kṛṣṇa-līlānugāyatīḥ

remire ’haḥsu tac-cittās tan-manaskā mahodayāḥ

TRANSLATION

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O King, thus during the daytime the women of Vṛndāvana took pleasure in continuously singing about the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, and those ladies’ minds and hearts, absorbed in Him, were filled with great festivity.

COMMENTARY

My dear King Parīkṣit! The *gopīs* minds (*tat-manaskāḥ*) were absorbed in Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa’s mind was absorbed in them. Therefore, since Kṛṣṇa and His beloved *gopīs* shared both roles of being the object (*āśraya*) and the subject of love (*viṣaya*), they concentrated their minds on each other. Thus, because they continually relished each other at every moment both in separation and meeting through their minds, it is said in this verse that the *gopīs* enjoyed (*remire*) the separation during the day.

Prema has two states: union and separation. Though the person absorbed in Kṛṣṇa appears to be suffering when He is separated from Kṛṣṇa, actually He is internally relishing the highest state of bliss. On the spiritual platform, the so-called pain of separation is simply a different variety of transcendental ecstasy. Thus pure love of God is the crown jewel of all goals of human endeavor.

Thus ends the commentary on the Thirty Fifth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Thirty-six

The Slaying of Ariṣṭa, the Bull Demon

|| 10.36.1 ||

śrī bādarāyaṇir uvāca

atha tarhy āgato goṣṭham ariṣṭo vṛṣabhāsuraḥ

mahīm mahā-kakut-kāyaḥ kampayan khura-vikṣatām

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Goswāmī said: The demon Ariṣṭa then came to the cowherd village. Appearing in the form of a bull with a large hump, he made the earth tremble as he tore it apart with his hooves.

COMMENTARY

This chapter describes the killing of Ariṣṭasura, and Kaṁsa's contemplation of the necessity of destroying Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma after learning from Nārada that They are actually the sons of Vasudeva. Kaṁsa responds by ordering Akrūra to bring Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma to Mathurā.

As *tarhi* (then) is used in this sentence, the word *yada* should also be supplied. Thus the meaning is that when (*yada*) Kṛṣṇa began His *rāsa-līla* in the evening, then (*tarhi*) Ariṣṭāsura came. The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* confirms that Ariṣṭāsura entered Kṛṣṇa's village at twilight, as the Lord prepared to dance with the *gopīs*:

prodoṣārdhe kadācit tu rāsāsakte janārdane

trāsayan sa-mado goṣṭham ariṣṭaḥ sampāgataḥ

"Once, midway through the period of dusk (*pradoṣa-kāla* 8:24 p.m.-10:48 p.m.), when Lord Janārdana was eager to perform the rāsa dance, Ariṣṭāsura madly entered the cowherd village, terrifying everyone."

Therefore the word *atha* (next) is spoken here to present a different idea in contrast to the mood of enjoying the *rāsa* dance. Ariṣṭa had the form of a bull with a very high (*mahat*) hump on his back. The stomping of his hooves made the earth tremble.

|| 10.36.2 ||

rambhamāṇaḥ kharataraṁ padā ca vilikhan mahīm

udyamya pucchaṁ vaprāṇi viṣāṇāgreṇa coddharan

kiñcit kiñcic chakṛn muñcan mūtrayan stabdha-locanaḥ

TRANSLATION

Ariṣṭāsura bellowed very harshly and pawed the ground. With his tail raised and his eyes glaring, he began to tear up the embankments with the tips of his horns, every now and then passing a little stool and urine.

COMMENTARY

Roaring very loudly and harshly, Ariṣṭa scraped the earth with his hooves. He dug out the embankments of the fields with his horns and passed stool here and there.

|| 10.36.3-4 ||

yasya nirhrāditenāṅga niṣṭhureṇa gavāṁ nṛṇām

patanty akālato garbhāḥ sravanti sma bhayena vai

nirviśanti ghanā yasya kakudy acala-śaṅkayā

taṁ tīkṣṇa-śṛṅgam udvīkṣya gopyo gopāś ca tatrasuḥ

TRANSLATION

My dear King, clouds hovered about sharp-horned Ariṣṭāsura's hump, mistaking it for a mountain, and when the cowherd men and ladies caught sight of the demon, they were struck with terror. Indeed, the strident reverberation of his roar so frightened the pregnant cows and women that they lost their fetuses in miscarriages.

COMMENTARY

Ariṣṭa's loud roaring made the cows and women have miscarriages. The Vedic literature categorizes miscarriages as follows: *ā-caturthād bhavet srāvaḥ pātaḥ pañcama-ṣaṣṭhayoḥ/ ata ūrdhvaṁ prasūtiḥ syāt.* "Up to the fourth month a premature delivery is called *srāva*, in the fifth and sixth months it is called *pāta*, and after this it is considered a birth (*prasūti*)."

|| 10.36.5 ||

paśavo dudruvur bhītā rājan santyajya go-kulam

kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇeti te sarve govindaṁ śaraṇaṁ yayuḥ

TRANSLATION

The domestic animals fled the pasture in fear, O King, and all the inhabitants rushed to Lord Govinda for shelter, crying, "Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa!"

|| 10.36.6 ||

bhagavān api tad vīkṣya go-kulaṁ bhaya-vidrutam

mā bhaiṣṭeti girāśvāsya vṛṣāsuram upāhvayat

TRANSLATION

When the Supreme Lord saw the cowherd community distraught and fleeing in fear, He calmed them, saying, "Don't be afraid." Then He called out to the bull demon as follows.

|| 10.36.7 ||

gopālaiḥ paśubhir manda trāsitaiḥ kim asattama

mayi śāstari duṣṭānāṁ tvad-vidhānāṁ durātmanām

TRANSLATION

You fool! What do you think you're doing, you wicked rascal, frightening the cowherd community and their animals when I am here just to punish corrupt miscreants like you!

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, "What do you gain by frightening the cows?" Addressing the demon as "most sinful one" (*asattama*), Kṛṣṇa suggests that no sin would be incurred by killing this demon bull, though normally killing a cow or bull is the most heinous sin.

|| 10.36.8 ||

ity āsphotyācyuto 'riṣṭaṁ tala-śabdena kopayan

sakhyur aṁse bhujābhogaṁ prasāryāvasthito hariḥ

TRANSLATION

Having spoken these words, the infallible Lord Hari slapped His arms with His palms, further angering Ariṣṭa with the loud sound. The Lord then casually threw His mighty, serpentine arm over the shoulder of a friend and stood facing the demon.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa slapped His arms with His palms to indicate His prowess in challenging the bull demon. Furthermore, Kṛṣṇa showed His contempt for the ignorant demon by nonchalantly throwing His serpentine arm onto the shoulder of His friend Subala.

|| 10.36.9 ||

so 'py evaṁ kopito 'riṣṭaḥ khureṇāvanim ullikhan

udyat-puccha-bhraman-meghaḥ kruddhaḥ kṛṣṇam upādravat

TRANSLATION

Thus provoked, Ariṣṭa pawed the ground with one of his hooves and then, with the clouds hovering around his upraised tail, furiously charged Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

Ariṣṭa showed his power by raising and twitching his tail, so that it disturbed the clouds in the sky.

|| 10.36.10 ||

agra-nyasta-viṣāṇāgraḥ stabdhāsṛg-locano ’cyutam

kaṭākṣipyādravat tūrṇam indra-mukto ’śanir yathā

TRANSLATION

Pointing the tips of his horns straight ahead and glaring menacingly at Lord Kṛṣṇa from the corners of his bloodshot eyes, Ariṣṭa rushed toward Him at full speed, like a thunderbolt hurled by Indra.

COMMENTARY

The bull’s glaring eyes were blood red with arrogance. He scolded Kṛṣṇa with his sidelong glances (*kaṭa-ākṣipya*).

|| 10.36.11 ||

gṛhītvā śṛṅgayos taṁ vā aṣṭādaśa padāni saḥ

pratyapovāha bhagavān gajaḥ prati-gajaṁ yathā

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa seized Ariṣṭāsura by the horns and threw him back eighteen steps, just as an elephant might do when fighting a rival elephant.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa threw (*pratyapovāha*) the bull in the opposite direction.

|| 10.36.12 ||

so ’paviddho bhagavatā punar utthāya satvaram

āpatat svinna-sarvāṅgo niḥśvasan krodha-mūrcchitaḥ

TRANSLATION

Thus repulsed by the Supreme Lord, the bull demon got up and, breathing hard and sweating all over his body, again charged Him in a mindless rage.

COMMENTARY

The bull got up after being thrown backwards.

|| 10.36.13 ||

tam āpatantaṁ sa nigṛhya śṛṅgayoḥ padā samākramya nipātya bhū-tale

niṣpīḍayām āsa yathārdram ambaraṁ kṛtvā viṣāṇena jaghāna so 'patat

TRANSLATION

As Ariṣṭa attacked, Lord Kṛṣṇa seized him by the horns and knocked him to the ground with His foot. The Lord then thrashed him as if he were a wet cloth, and finally He yanked out one of the demon's horns and struck him with it until he lay prostrate.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa forcefully seized the demon by his horns. Then Kṛṣṇa beat him like a piece of wet cloth, extracted his left horn and stuck him with it.

|| 10.36.14 ||

asṛg vaman mūtra-śakṛt samutsṛjan kṣipaṁś ca pādān anavasthitekṣaṇaḥ

jagāma kṛcchraṁ nirṛter atha kṣayaṁ puṣpaiḥ kiranto harim īḍire surāḥ

TRANSLATION

Vomiting blood and profusely excreting stool and urine, kicking his legs and rolling his eyes about, Ariṣṭāsura thus went painfully to the abode of Death. The demigods honored Lord Kṛṣṇa by scattering flowers upon Him.

COMMENTARY

Ariṣṭa underwent great difficulty, and then Yamarāja came to kill him, rather than Kṛṣṇa Himself. Nevertheless he immediately attained liberation. The demigods praised Kṛṣṇa by showering flowers (*puṣpaiḥ kiranto*).

|| 10.36.15 ||

evaṁ kukudminaṁ hatvā stūyamānaḥ dvijātibhiḥ

viveśa goṣṭhaṁ sa-balo gopīnāṁ nayanotsavaḥ

TRANSLATION

Having thus killed the bull demon Ariṣṭa, He who is a festival for the gopīs' eyes entered the cowherd village with Balarāma.

COMMENTARY

Nayana-utsavaḥ means a personified festival for the eyes.

|| 10.36.16 ||

ariṣṭe nihate daitye kṛṣṇenādbhuta-karmaṇā

kaṁsāyāthāha bhagavān nārado deva-darśanaḥ

TRANSLATION

After Ariṣṭāsura had been killed by Kṛṣṇa, who acts wonderfully, Nārada Muni went to speak to King Kaṁsa. That powerful sage of godly vision addressed the King as follows.

COMMENTARY

The term *deva-darśana*, a name for Nārada Muni, indicates that Nārada has attained the perfection of seeing God, and that he knows or sees the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa. Knowing that Kṛṣṇa's *vraja-līlā* was ending, Nārada spoke to Kaṁsa to induce him to bring Kṛṣṇa to Mathurā.

In twenty verses the *Purāṇas* describe how Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Śyāma-kuṇḍa appeared after the killing of Ariṣṭāsura as a result of a joking conversation between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

Rādhā said, “O sinful killer of a bull! Do not touch Me today.”

Kṛṣṇa replied, “O foolish woman! This is not a bull, but a terrible demon disguised as a bull.”

Rādhā: “O Kṛṣṇa that may be true. But even though Ariṣṭa was a terrible demon, still he was a male cow, so You will have to undergo atonement, just as Lord Indra did after killing the demon Vṛtrāsura, who was a *brāhmaṇa*.”

Kṛṣṇa: “O Rādhā! What should I do to atone for this act?”

Rādhā: “You can purify Yourself by bathing in every single holy place in the three worlds.”

Kṛṣṇa: “Why should I have to wander throughout the entire universe? I will at once bring all the countless pilgrimage places here and take My bath in them. Just watch!”

Saying that, Mukunda struck His heel on the ground to make a hole and said, “Come here.” Then all the holy waters in the universe and their presiding deities came there along with the Bhogavatī River, coming from the Pātāla region.

Kṛṣṇa: “Hey *sakhīs*! Behold all the holy waters!”

But the *gopīs* did not believe Kṛṣṇa’s words. Then those best of holy places, joining their palms in supplication, came forward and introduced themselves.

“I am the salt ocean. I am the ocean of milk. I am the Amara-dīrghikā. I am the river Sona. I am the Sindhu. I am the Tāmraparnī. I am the holy place Puṣkara. I am the river Sarasvatī. We are the Godāvarī, Yamunā and Revā rivers and the confluence of rivers at Prayāga. Just see our waters!”

After purifying Himself by bathing, Kṛṣṇa became quite arrogant and said, “I have made one lake containing all the various holy places, but none of you have performed such pious work.”

Hearing this, Rādhā said to her friends, “I must create an even more beautiful lake. Go to work and construct one with great care.” West of Kṛṣṇa’s *kuṇḍa*, where Ariṣṭa’s hooves had made a hole, the *gopīs* began digging up lumps of soft mud with their hands, and in the short span of an hour (*ghaṭikā-dvayena*) made a beautiful, divine *kuṇḍa*.

Astonished to see the lake the *gopīs* produced, Kṛṣṇa thought of enjoying *rāsa* and said, “O lotus-eyed Rādhā, please take some of the holy water from My *kuṇḍa* and fill up Your *kuṇḍa*.”

Rādhā said, “No, no, no, no! This is impossible, since the water of Your lake is contaminated by Your terrible sin of killing a cow. My countless sakhīs will bring billions of pots of pure water from Mānasa-gaṅgā to fill up My *kuṇḍa*. By this My fame will be spread throughout the universe.”

At that time Śrī Kṛṣṇa gestured to a heavenly personality who was an intimate associate of all the holy places. Suddenly that person rose up out of Kṛṣṇa’s *kuṇḍa* and bowed down to Vṛsabhānunandinī. Then, with folded hands and tears in her eyes, she began to offer praises.

“O goddess, even Lord Brahmā himself, the knower of all scriptures, cannot understand Your glories, nor can Lord Śiva or Laksmī. Only Kṛṣṇa, the best of men, can understand them, and thus He feels obliged to personally wipe the perspiration from Your limbs when You are fatigued. Kṛṣṇa is always anointing Your lotus feet with nectarean *cāru* and *yāvaka* and decorating them with ankle bells. Kṛṣṇa rejoices and feels most fortunate simply by serving Your lotus feet. On Kṛṣṇa’s order we have immediately come here to live in this most excellent lake, which He created by one stroke of His heel. But only if You now feel satisfied with us and bestow upon us Your merciful glance will the tree of our desire bear fruit.”

Being satisfied with the praises spoken by the representative of all the holy places, Rādhā said, “So, kindly tell Me your desire.”

The holy places clearly stated their desire: “Our lives will be successful if we can enter Your *kuṇḍa*. This is the boon we pray for.”

Glancing at Her beloved from the corners of Her eyes, Vṛsabhānunandinī replied with a smile, “Please come.”

Rādhā’s *sakhīs* all agreed with Her decision and became immersed in the ocean of happiness. Indeed, all the moving and non-moving creatures became enlivened. Thus gaining the mercy of Rādhā, the holy rivers and lakes in Śrī Kṛṣṇa-kuṇḍa forcibly broke through its boundary walls and swiftly filled Rādhā-kuṇḍa with their waters.

Kṛṣṇa said, “O most beloved! May Your *kuṇḍa* become more famous in the world than Mine. I will come here daily to bathe and to enjoy My water pastimes. Indeed, Your *kuṇḍa* is as dear to Me as You are.”

Rādhā replied, “I will bathe daily in Your *kunda* as well, even though You may kill hundreds of Ariṣṭa demons here. In the future, anyone who has intense devotion for this *kuṇḍa*, which is on the spot where You chastised Ariṣṭāsura, and who bathes or resides here is sure to become very dear to Me (*snāyād vasen mama sa eva mahā-priyo ’stu*).”

That night a brilliant flash of beautiful lightning in the form of Śrī Rādhikā, whose glory is spread throughout the three worlds, caused a shower of blissful *rasa* to fall from the Kṛṣṇa cloud by performing a *rāsa* dance on the banks of Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

|| 10.36.17 ||

yaśodāyāḥ sutāṁ kanyāṁ devakyāḥ kṛṣṇam eva ca

rāmaṁ ca rohiṇī-putraṁ vasudevena bibhyatā

nyastau sva-mitre nande vai yābhyāṁ te puruṣā hatāḥ

TRANSLATION

[Nārada told Kaṁsa:] Yaśodā’s child was actually a daughter, and Kṛṣṇa is the son of Devakī. Also, Rāma is the son of Rohiṇī. Out of fear, Vasudeva entrusted Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma to his friend Nanda Mahārāja, and it is these two boys who have killed your men.

COMMENTARY

If one asks what Nārada Muni said to Kaṁsa, the answer is given in the present verse. Nārada said, “The girl, who is known as the eighth child born to Devakī, is actually the daughter of Yaśodā. The son of Rohiṇī, Rāma, is the seventh child of Devakī. Or else, he also said that Rāma, who is known as the son of Nanda, is actually the son of Rohiṇī, the wife of Vasudeva.”

Kaṁsa said, “If Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma are Vasudeva’s children, who brought them to Vraja?”

Nārada replied, “They were brought by Vasudeva.”

|| 10.36.18 ||

niśamya tad bhoja-patiḥ kopāt pracalitendriyaḥ

niśātam asim ādatta vasudeva-jighāṁsayā

TRANSLATION

Upon hearing this, the master of the Bhojas became furious and lost control of his senses. He picked up a sharp sword to kill Vasudeva.

COMMENTARY

Kaṁsa took up his sword, but not in the presence of Vasudeva.

|| 10.36.19 ||

nivārito nāradena tat-sutau mṛtyum ātmanaḥ

jñātvā loha-māyāiḥ pāśair babandha saha bhāryayā

TRANSLATION

But Nārada restrained Kaṁsa by reminding him that it was the two sons of Vasudeva who would cause his death. Kaṁsa then had Vasudeva and his wife shackled in iron chains.

COMMENTARY

Nārada prevented Kaṁsa from killing Vasudeva by giving the following advice: “If you kill Vasudeva, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma will flee in terror. Do not reveal to Vasudeva that you want to kill Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. If you tell him, he will tell his friend Nanda, who will flee with his sons. Therefore on some pretext imprison Vasudeva and Devakī, and bring Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma to Mathurā.”

One should not think that in saying this, Nārada was being cruel to Devakī and Vasudeva. Rather, this was a sign of affection. Indeed, Nārada received hundreds of benedictions offered by Vasudeva and Devakī when they experienced the joy of seeing with great anticipation the face of their arriving son. Thus there was no fault in Narada’s suggesting that they be imprisoned.

|| 10.36.20 ||

pratiyāte tu devarṣau kaṁsa ābhāṣya keśinam

preṣayām āsa hanyetāṁ bhavatā rāma-keśavau

TRANSLATION

After Nārada left, King Kaṁsa summoned Keśī and ordered him, “Go kill Rāma and Kṛṣṇa.”

COMMENTARY

Kaṁsa ordered Kesī, “Go to Vraja and kill (*hanyetāṁ*) Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma.” According to the inspiration of Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning, *hanyetāṁ* also means “you should meet Them,” or in other words, “you should be killed.”

|| 10.36.21 ||

tato muṣṭika-cāṇūra śala-tośalakādikān

amātyān hastipāṁś caiva samāhūyāha bhoja-rāṭ

TRANSLATION

The King of the Bhojas next called for his ministers, headed by Muṣṭika, Cāṇūra, Śala and Tośala, and also for his elephant-keepers. The King addressed them as follows.

|| 10.36.22-23 ||

bho bho niśamyatām etad vīra-cāṇūra-muṣṭikau

nanda-vraje kilāsāte sutāv ānakadundubheḥ

rāma-kṛṣṇau tato mahyaṁ mṛtyuḥ kila nidarśitaḥ

bhavadbhyām iha samprāptau hanyetāṁ malla-līlayā

TRANSLATION

My dear heroic Cāṇūra and Muṣṭika, please hear this. Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, the sons of Ānakadundubhi [Vasudeva], are living in Nanda's cowherd village. It has been predicted that these two boys will be the cause of my death. When They are brought here, kill Them on the pretext of engaging Them in a wrestling match.

COMMENTARY

Kaṁsa said, "My death has been predicted (*nidarśitaḥ*) by Nārada."

|| 10.36.24 ||

mañcāḥ kriyantāṁ vividhā malla-raṅga-pariśritāḥ

paurā jānapadāḥ sarve paśyantu svaira-saṁyugam

TRANSLATION

Erect a wrestling ring with many surrounding viewing stands, and bring all the residents of the city and the outlying districts to see the open competition.

COMMENTARY

Kaṁsa said, "Furthermore, in order to deceive Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma and increase Their enthusiasm to fight, a great festival should be arranged. Otherwise They will run away."

|| 10.36.25 ||

mahāmātra tvayā bhadra raṅga-dvāry upanīyatām

dvipaḥ kuvalayāpīḍo jahi tena mamāhitau

TRANSLATION

You, elephant-keeper, my good man, should position the elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa at the entrance to the wrestling arena and have him kill my two enemies.

COMMENTARY

Kaṁsa said, “O elephant keeper! Place Kuvalayāpīḍa at the entrance of the arena to kill my two enemies (Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma), who are not beneficial (*ahitau*) to me.”

|| 10.36.26 ||

ārabhyatāṁ dhanur-yāgaś caturdaśyāṁ yathā-vidhi

viśasantu paśūn medhyān bhūta-rājāya mīḍhuṣe

TRANSLATION

Commence the bow sacrifice on the Caturdaśī day in accordance with the relevant Vedic injunctions. In ritual slaughter offer the appropriate kinds of animals to the magnanimous Lord Śiva.

COMMENTARY

Kaṁsa said, “For my prosperity, you should behead some goats and offer them to Lord Śiva (*bhūta-rājāya*), the giver of benedictions.”

|| 10.36.27 ||

ity ājñāpyārtha-tantra-jña āhūya yadu-puṅgavam

gṛhītvā pāṇinā pāṇiṁ tato ’krūram uvāca ha

TRANSLATION

Having thus commanded his ministers, Kaṁsa next called for Akrūra, the most eminent of the Yadus. Kaṁsa knew the art of securing personal advantage, and thus he took Akrūra’s hand in his own and spoke to him as follows.

COMMENTARY

Kaṁsa knew about *artha-śāstra* (*ārtha-tantra-jña*), the art of securing personal interest, and *kāma*, sense gratification. But Kaṁsa knew nothing about *dharma* and *mokṣa* (religion and liberation).

|| 10.36.28 ||

bho bho dāna-pate mahyaṁ kriyatāṁ maitram ādṛtaḥ

nānyas tvatto hitatamo vidyate bhoja-vṛṣṇiṣu

TRANSLATION

My dear Akrūra, most charitable one, please do me a friendly favor out of respect. Among the Bhojas and Vṛṣṇis, there is no one else as kind to us as you.

COMMENTARY

Kaṁsa said, "To satisfy (*mahyaṁ*) me, Akrūra, please do this as an act of friendship (*maitram*)."

|| 10.36.29 ||

atas tvām āśritaḥ saumya kārya-gaurava-sādhanam

yathendro viṣṇum āśritya svārtham adhyagamad vibhuḥ

TRANSLATION

Gentle Akrūra, you always carry out your duties soberly, and therefore I am depending on you, just as powerful Indra took shelter of Lord Viṣṇu to achieve his goals.

COMMENTARY

Kaṁsa said, "I have come to you because among my relations you can execute the task most perfectly."

|| 10.36.30 ||

gaccha nanda-vrajaṁ tatra sutāv ānakadundubheḥ

āsāte tāv ihānena rathenānaya mā ciram

TRANSLATION

Please go to Nanda's village, where the two sons of Ānakadundubhi are living, and without delay bring Them here on this chariot.

COMMENTARY

When Kaṁsa said "on this chariot (*rathena*)," he pointed with his index finger to a brand-new, attractive chariot. Kaṁsa thought that since Akrūra was innocent by nature, when he saw this fine, new vehicle he would naturally want to drive it and quickly bring Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma back to Mathurā. The actual reason why Akrūra accepted the new chariot was that he knew that it would have been clearly inappropriate to bring Kṛṣṇa in something enjoyed previously by the wicked Kaṁsa.

|| 10.36.31 ||

nisṛṣṭaḥ kila me mṛtyur devair vaikuṇṭha-saṁśrayaiḥ

tāv ānaya samaṁ gopair nandādyaiḥ sābhyupāyanaiḥ

TRANSLATION

The demigods, who are under the protection of Viṣṇu, have sent these two boys as my death. Bring Them here, and also have Nanda and the other cowherd men come with gifts of tribute.

COMMENTARY

Kaṁsa said, "These two boys have been especially sent as my death by the demigods who have taken shelter of Viṣṇu."

|| 10.36.32 ||

ghātayiṣya ihānītau kāla-kalpena hastinā

yadi muktau tato mallair ghātaye vaidyutopamaiḥ

TRANSLATION

After you bring Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, I will have Them killed by my elephant, who is as powerful as death itself. And if by chance They escape from him, I will have Them killed by my wrestlers, who are as strong as lightning.

COMMENTARY

Kaṁsa said, “Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma will be killed by these wrestlers who are as strong as thunderbolts (*vaidyuta*).

|| 10.36.33 ||

tayor nihatayos taptān vasudeva-purogamān

tad-bandhūn nihaniṣyāmi vṛṣṇi-bhoja-daśārhakān

TRANSLATION

When these two have been killed, I will kill Vasudeva and all Their lamenting relatives—the Vṛṣṇis, Bhojas and Daśārhas.

COMMENTARY

Kaṁsa said, “After these two boys are killed, I will kill Vasudeva, the Vṛṣṇis, and their friends in the Bhoja and Daśārha dynasties.”

|| 10.36.34 ||

ugrasenaṁ ca pitaraṁ sthaviraṁ rājya-kāmukaṁ

tad-bhrātaraṁ devakaṁ ca ye cānye vidviṣo mama

TRANSLATION

I will also kill my old father, Ugrasena, who is greedy for my kingdom, and I will kill his brother Devaka and all my other enemies as well.

COMMENTARY

Kaṁsa said, “I will also kill all my other enemies.”

|| 10.36.35-36 ||

tataś caiṣā mahī mitra bhavitrī naṣṭa-kaṇṭakā

jarāsandho mama gurur dvivido dayitaḥ sakhā

śambaro narako bāṇo mayy eva kṛta-sauhṛdāḥ

tair ahaṁ sura-pakṣīyān hatvā bhokṣye mahīṁ nṛpān

TRANSLATION

Then, my friend, this earth will be free of thorns.

My elder relative Jarāsandha and my dear friend Dvivida are solid well-wishers of mine, as are Śambara, Naraka and Bāṇa. I will use them all to kill off those kings who are allied with the demigods, and then I will rule the earth.

COMMENTARY

It may be objected, “How will the world be without thorns if Jarāsandha and others are present?” Kaṁsa answers in this verse, “Jarāsandha is my father-in-law (*guru*).”

|| 10.36.37 ||

etaj jñātvānaya kṣipraṁ rāma-kṛṣṇāv ihārbhakau

dhanur-makha-nirīkṣārthaṁ draṣṭuṁ yadu-pura-śriyam

TRANSLATION

Now that you understand my intentions, please go at once and bring Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma to watch the bow sacrifice and see the opulence of the Yadus’ capital.

COMMENTARY

Kaṁsa said, “You should not tell this secret plot to others, but you should speak as follows, inviting the boys to the *dhanur-yajña* (*dhanur-makha*), bow sacrifice.”

|| 10.36.38 ||

śrī-akrūra uvāca

rājan manīṣitaṁ sadhryak tava svāvadya-mārjanam

siddhy-asiddhyoḥ samaṁ kuryād daivaṁ hi phala-sādhanam

TRANSLATION

Śrī Akrūra said: O King, you have expertly devised a process to free yourself of misfortune. Still, one should be equal in success and failure, since it is certainly destiny that produces the results of one's work.

COMMENTARY

Akrura replied, "Kaṁsa, you have thoroughly considered how to avoid your death. Now hear the injunctions of *Nīti-śāstra*. In regards to success or failure, one should perform action with a cool head, since fate alone will determine the result."

|| 10.36.39 ||

manorathān karoty uccair jano daiva-hatān api

yujyate harṣa-śokābhyāṁ tathāpy ājñāṁ karomi te

TRANSLATION

An ordinary person is determined to act on his desires even when fate prevents their fulfillment. Therefore he encounters both happiness and distress. Yet even though such is the case, I will execute your order.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra said, "Ordinary persons (*jano*) perform activities with expectations that are sometimes fulfilled and sometimes unfulfilled, leading to happiness or distress. I will carry out my orders so that you will be happy." This is the external meaning, but the implied idea is: "You are no different from a low animal (*jano:jantu*)."

Another meaning is: "I will execute this order of yours, since you are indeed fortunate and are going to become joyful." This is the external meaning. The implied idea is that, "Although it is not fitting to execute the order of you, who are about to die, I will do so

because you are the king and I am your subject." Another meaning is: "Though your desires will not be fulfilled, mine will be fulfilled, so I will carry out your order."

|| 10.36.40 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

evam ādiśya cākrūraṁ mantriṇaś ca viṣṛjya saḥ

praviveśa gṛhaṁ kaṁsas tathākrūraḥ svam ālayam

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having thus instructed Akrūra, King Kaṁsa dismissed his ministers and retired to his quarters, and Akrūra returned home.

Thus ends the commentary on the Thirty sixth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Thirty-seven

The Killing of the Demons Keśī and Vyoma

|| 10.37.1-2 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

keśī tu kaṁsa-prahitaḥ khurair mahīṁ mahā-hayo nirjarayan mano-javaḥ

saṭāvadhūtābhra-vimāna-saṅkulaṁ kurvan nabho heṣita-bhīṣitākhilaḥ

taṁ trāsayantaṁ bhagavān sva-gokulaṁ tad-dheṣitair vāla-vighūrṇitāmbudam

ātmānam ājau mṛgayantam agra-ṇīr upāhvayat sa vyanadan mṛgendra-vat

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: The demon Keśī, sent by Kaṁsa, appeared in Vraja as a great horse. Running with the speed of the mind, he tore up the earth with his hooves. The hairs of his mane scattered the clouds and the demigods' airplanes throughout the sky, and he terrified everyone present with his loud neighing.

When the Supreme Personality of Godhead saw how the demon was frightening His village of Gokula by neighing terribly and shaking the clouds with his tail, the Lord came forward to meet him. Keśī was searching for Kṛṣṇa to fight, so when the Lord stood before him and challenged him to approach, the horse responded by roaring like a lion.

COMMENTARY

This chapter describes the killing of Keśī, Nārada's praising of Kṛṣṇa's future pastimes, Kṛṣṇa's pastime of playing cops and robbers and the killing of Vyomāsura.

Kṛṣṇa called out to the demon that had been sent by Kaṁsa. Keśī made the earth tremble with the stomping of his hooves. Shaking his mane, he disturbed the clouds and the airplanes of the demigods. His loud neighing instilled fear in all people. He shook the clouds with His tail.

|| 10.37.3 ||

sa taṁ niśāmyābhimukho makhena khaṁ
pibann ivābhyadravad aty-amarṣaṇaḥ

jaghāna padbhyām aravinda-locanaṁ

durāsadaś caṇḍa-javo duratyayaḥ

TRANSLATION

Seeing the Lord standing before him, Keśī ran toward Him in extreme rage, his mouth gaping as if to swallow up the sky. Rushing with furious speed, the unconquerable and unapproachable horse demon tried to strike the lotus-eyed Lord with his two front legs.

COMMENTARY

Keśī, whom no one could approach (*durāsadam*) or defeat (*duratyayaḥ*), charged at Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.37.4 ||

tad vañcayitvā tam adhokṣajo ruṣā pragṛhya dorbhyāṁ parividhya pādayoḥ

sāvajñam utsṛjya dhanuḥ-śatāntare yathoragaṁ tārkṣya-suto vyavasthitaḥ

TRANSLATION

But the transcendental Lord dodged Keśī's blow and then with His arms angrily seized the demon by the legs, whirled him around in the air and contemptuously

threw him the distance of one hundred bow-lengths, just as Garuḍa might throw a snake. Lord Kṛṣṇa then stood there.

COMMENTARY

When Keśī kicked his hind legs, Kṛṣṇa dodged him, grabbed Keśī's extended legs with His hands, twirled him around, and threw him six-hundred feet away. Astonishingly, Kṛṣṇa did all this while standing in one place.

|| 10.37.5 ||

saḥ labdha-saṁjñaḥ punar utthito ruṣā vyādāya keśī tarasāpatad dharim

so 'py asya vaktre bhujam uttaraṁ smāyān praveśayām āsa yathoragaṁ bile

TRANSLATION

Upon regaining consciousness Keśī angrily got up, opened his mouth wide and again rushed to attack Lord Kṛṣṇa. But the Lord just smiled and thrust His left arm into the horse's mouth as easily as one would make a snake enter a hole in the ground.

COMMENTARY

Keśī stood up after regaining consciousness (*labdha-saṁjñaḥ*), opened his mouth wide and charged again. Kṛṣṇa just laughed, showed His left thumb and said, "Do you want to eat something? Here, eat this!" Kṛṣṇa then thrust His left arm into Keśī's open mouth to kill him, just as a snake easily enters a hole to kill a mouse.

|| 10.37.6 ||

dantā nipetur bhagavad-bhuja-spṛśas te keśinas tapta-māyā-spṛśo yathā

bāhuś ca tad-deha-gato mahātmano yathāmayaḥ saṁvavṛdhe upekṣitaḥ

TRANSLATION

Keśī's teeth immediately fell out when they touched the Supreme Lord's arm, which to the demon felt as hot as molten iron. Within Keśī's body the Supreme Personality's arm then expanded greatly, like a diseased stomach swelling because of neglect.

COMMENTARY

“Alas, alas! How could Kṛṣṇa place His arm, tender as the stem of a blue lotus, into the mouth of Keśī, which was filled with fierce teeth?” Anticipating such an objection by the disturbed Parīkṣit Mahārāja, Śukadeva Gosvāmī answers in this verse.

As Keśī’s teeth touched Kṛṣṇa’s arm to chew on it, they became uprooted and fell out, just as if contacting a red-hot iron. Although Kṛṣṇa’s arm is softer and more cooling than a blue lotus, to Keśī it felt as hard and hot as a thunderbolt, just as a jaundiced person perceives sugar candy as bitter. Kṛṣṇa’s arm expanded within Keśī’s mouth until He died, just as Kṛṣṇa expanded His body within the mouth of Aghāsura.

|| 10.37.7 ||

samedhamānena sa kṛṣṇa-bāhunā niruddha-vāyuś caraṇāṁś ca vikṣipan

prasvinna-gātraḥ parivṛtta-locanaḥ papāta laṇḍaṁ visṛjan kṣitau vyasuḥ

TRANSLATION

As Lord Kṛṣṇa’s expanding arm completely blocked Keśī’s breathing, his legs kicked convulsively, his body became covered with sweat, and his eyes rolled around. The demon then passed stool and fell on the ground, dead.

COMMENTARY

Expelling stool (*laṇḍaṁ*), Keśī expired.

|| 10.37.8 ||

tad-dehataḥ karkaṭikā-phalopamād vyasor apākṛṣya bhujaṁ mahā-bhujaḥ

avismito ’yatna-hatārikaḥ suraiḥ prasūna-varṣair varṣadbhir īḍitaḥ

TRANSLATION

The mighty-armed Kṛṣṇa withdrew His arm from Keśī’s body, which now appeared like a long karkaṭikā fruit. Without the least display of pride at having

so effortlessly killed His enemy, the Lord accepted the demigods' worship in the form of flowers rained down from above.

COMMENTARY

Keśī's body burst open like an over-ripe melon. In spite of killing the big demon, Kṛṣṇa was not proud, since He did it very easily. The demigods sprinkled flowers and fine drops of water to dispel Kṛṣṇa's fatigue.

|| 10.37.9 ||

devarṣir upasaṅgamya bhāgavata-pravaro nṛpa

kṛṣṇam akliṣṭa-karmāṇaṁ rahasy etad abhāṣata

TRANSLATION

My dear King, thereafter Lord Kṛṣṇa was approached in a solitary place by the great sage among the demigods, Nārada Muni. That most exalted devotee spoke as follows to the Lord, who effortlessly performs His pastimes.

COMMENTARY

"Now that Your *vraja-līlā* is completed, please show Your Mathurā-līlā." Thus requesting Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Nārada Muni, the sage among the demigods, praised his Lord and master.

Nārada is called *bhāgavata-pravara* because he fulfilled the exalted desires (*varo:manoratha-siddhiḥ*) of the devotees in Mathurā. He spoke to Kṛṣṇa who effortlessly killed (*akliṣṭa-karmāṇaṁ*) the ferocious Keśī demon.

|| 10.37.10-11 ||

kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇāprameyātman yogeśa jagad-īśvara

vāsudevākhilāvāsa sātvatāṁ pravara prabho

tvam ātmā sarva-bhūtānām eko jyotir ivaidhasām

gūḍho guhā-śayaḥ sākṣī mahā-puruṣa īśvaraḥ

TRANSLATION

[Nārada Muni said:] O Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, unlimited Lord, source of all mystic power, Lord of the universe! O Vāsudeva, shelter of all beings and best of the Yadus ! O master, You are the Supreme Soul of all created beings, sitting unseen within the cave of the heart like the fire dormant within kindling wood. You are the witness within everyone, the Supreme Personality and the ultimate controlling Deity.

COMMENTARY

Nārada called out Kṛṣṇa's name twice (*kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa*) out of great bliss, while thinking himself as just a semblance of a devotee who praises the Lord by the *sankirtana* of His names.

Nārada Muni said, "No one can measure or understand Your mind (*ātmā:manaḥ*). Therefore who can ascertain what's on Your mind, whether You intend to remain in Vraja giving joy to Your parents and the other Vrajavāsīs, or whether You will go to Mathurā? As the controller of *yogamāyā* (*yogeśa*), You can easily stay in both places without difficulty. And as the master of the universe (*jagat-īśvara*), You must kill the demons who burden the earth.

"You are famous as the son of Nanda, but now You should become known as the son of Vasudeva (*vāsudeva*), thus generating his good fortune. Therefore come live in Mathurā and relieve all Your devotees there from their fear of Kaṁsa. You are the best (*pravara*) fulfiller of desires and the best among the Yadus (*sātvatām*). Thus, O master (*prabho*), You can do anything!"

Kṛṣṇa replied, "I act according to My desires, so why are you making a request from Me?"

Nārada answered, "You are the Supersoul within me (*tvam ātmā*), who gave me the inspiration to request You, so what can I do? You dwell not only in My heart, but within the hearts of all living beings (*sarva-bhūtānam*), You remain hidden just like fire within wood. Just as You rest in the caves of Govardhana as Nanda's son, You rest within the heart as the Supersoul. Though You are resting in the heart, You are the witness (*sākṣi*) of everything. Thus You are the greatest person (*mahā-puruṣa*) with the power to do anything. Generally, even great persons have someone above them with more power. But You alone are the Supreme Controller (*īśvara*) of everyone."

|| 10.37.12 ||

ātmanātmāśrayaḥ pūrvaṁ māyayā sasṛje guṇān

tair idaṁ satya-saṅkalpaḥ sṛjasy atsy avasīśvaraḥ

TRANSLATION

You are the shelter of all souls, and being the supreme controller, You fulfill Your desires simply by Your will. By Your personal creative potency You manifested in the beginning the primal modes of material nature, and through their agency You create, maintain and then destroy this universe.

COMMENTARY

"If You had not created myself, my intelligence and the rest of the universe, then I would not be able to make any request from You." With this intention Nārada speaks.

Nārada said, "You are independent and the shelter of all souls (*atma-āśrayaḥ*). By Your energies, which are non-different from You (*atmana*), You create the elements starting from *mahat-tattva*. As You create this world, You also inspire everyone to fulfill their desires. In this way, although I am another separate person, I am trying to request You."

|| 10.37.13 ||

sa tvaṁ bhūdhara-bhūtānāṁ daitya-pramatha-rakṣasām

avatīrṇo vināśāya sādhunāṁ rakṣaṇāya ca

TRANSLATION

You, that very same creator, have now descended on the earth to annihilate the Daitya, Pramatha and Rākṣasa demons who are posing as kings, and also to protect the godly.

COMMENTARY

Nārada continued, "Therefore I have come today to make a request. You are the creator mentioned in the previous verse, and You have appeared to protect the devotees and destroy the demons posing as kings."

|| 10.37.14 ||

diṣṭyā te nihato daityo līlayāyaṁ hayākṛtiḥ

yasya heṣita-santrastās tyajanty animiṣā divam

TRANSLATION

The horse demon was so terrifying that his neighing frightened the demigods into leaving their heavenly kingdom. But by our good fortune You have enjoyed the sport of killing him.

COMMENTARY

Nārada said, “You have destroyed this demon for the benefit (*diṣṭyā*) of the people.”

|| 10.37.15-20 ||

cāṇūraṁ muṣṭikaṁ caiva mallān anyāṁś ca hastinam

kaṁsaṁ ca nihataṁ drakṣye paraśvo ’hani te vibho

tasyānu śaṅkha-yavana-murāṇāṁ narakasya ca

pārijātāpaharaṇam indrasya ca parājayam

udvāhaṁ vīra-kanyānāṁ vīrya-śulkādi-lakṣaṇam

nṛgasya mokṣaṇaṁ śāpād dvārakāyāṁ jagat-pate

syamantakasya ca maṇer ādānaṁ saha bhāryayā

mṛta-putra-pradānaṁ ca brāhmaṇasya sva-dhāmataḥ

pauṇḍrakasya vadhaṁ paścāt kāśi-puryāś ca dīpanam

dantavakrasya nidhanaṁ caidyasya ca mahā-kratau

yāni cānyāni vīryāṇi dvārakām āvasan bhavān

kartā drakṣyāmy ahaṁ tāni geyāni kavibhir bhuvi

TRANSLATION

In just two days, O almighty Lord, I will see the deaths of Cāṇūra, Muṣṭika and other wrestlers, along with those of the elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa and King Kaṁsa—all by Your hand. Then I will see You kill Kālayavana, Mura, Naraka and the conch demon, and I will also see You steal the pārijāta flower and defeat Indra. I will then see You marry many daughters of heroic kings after paying for them with Your valor. Then, O Lord of the universe, in Dvārakā You will deliver King Nṛga from a curse and take for Yourself the Syamantaka jewel, together with another wife. You will bring back a brāhmaṇa's dead son from the abode of Your servant Yamarāja, and thereafter You will kill Pauṇḍraka, burn down the city of Kāśī and annihilate Dantavakra and the King of Cedi during the great Rājasūya sacrifice. I shall see all these heroic pastimes, along with many others You will perform during Your residence in Dvārakā. These pastimes are glorified on this earth in the songs of transcendental poets.

COMMENTARY

Nārada said, "I know the sequence of Your pastimes, having already seen them in Your various previous descents. This is only an outline of Your future pastimes, and is not intended to be a comprehensive account. I will see You kill the Pañcajana (*śaṅkha*) demon. I will watch You retrieve the Syamantaka jewel along with Your wife (*bhāryayā*) Jāmbavatī. And You will deliver a *brāhmaṇa's* son from the abode of Yamaraja."

|| 10.37.21 ||

atha te kāla-rūpasya kṣapayiṣṇor amuṣya vai

akṣauhiṇīnāṁ nidhanaṁ drakṣyāmy arjuna-sāratheḥ

TRANSLATION

Subsequently I will see You appear as time personified, serving as Arjuna's chariot driver and destroying entire armies of soldiers to rid the earth of her burden.

COMMENTARY

Nārada said, "I will see You, who destroys the universe in the form of time, destroy the armies opposing Arjuna."

|| 10.37.22 ||

viśuddha-vijñāna-ghanaṁ sva-saṁsthayā
samāpta-sarvārtham amogha-vāñchitam

sva-tejasā nitya-nivṛtta-māyā-

guṇa-pravāhaṁ bhagavantam īmahi

TRANSLATION

Let us approach You, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, for shelter. You are full of perfectly pure spiritual awareness and are always situated in Your original identity. Since Your will is never thwarted, You have already achieved all possible desirable things, and by the power of Your spiritual energy You remain eternally aloof from the flow of the qualities of illusion.

COMMENTARY

After describing the future pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, Nārada offers his respects in two verses: "I offer my respects to You, O Lord, who are the concentrated Brahman or spiritual essence and the ultimate object of pure realization. All the desires of the devotees reside completely in You who exist eternally along with Your associates. You mercifully fulfill all those desires. Through Your potency, or else by the potency of Your pure devotees, You help them every day (*nityam:prati-dinam*) to avoid the influence of the modes of material nature."

|| 10.37.23 ||

tvām īśvaraṁ svāśrayam ātma-māyayā vinirmitāśeṣa-viśeṣa-kalpanam

krīḍārtham adyātta-manuṣya-vigrahaṁ nato 'smi dhuryaṁ yadu-vṛṣṇi-sātvatām

TRANSLATION

I bow down to You, the supreme controller, who are dependent only on Yourself. By Your potency You have constructed the unlimited particular arrangements of this universe. Now you have appeared as the greatest hero among the Yadus, Vṛṣṇis and Sātvatas and have chosen to participate in human warfare.

COMMENTARY

Nārada said, "There is no one like You. You have the power to control (*īśvara*) all others. You are self-contained (*sva-āśrayam*); not under the shelter of anyone. All others must take shelter of You." *Sva-āśrayam* means that Kṛṣṇa does not depend on anyone else. Therefore He is not under anyone else's control.

Nārada continued, “Kṛṣṇa, You create this variegated universe by *māyā*, who is subordinate to You. Your only object is to play. Now You will fight with humans like Kaṁsa after killing Keśī, who was Kaṁsa’s very life. I offer respects to You.”

An alternate reading: Nārada said, “All this is simply Your play in order protect Your relatives, the Yadus,Vṛṣṇis and Sātvatās.”

|| 10.37.24 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

evaṁ yadu-patiṁ kṛṣṇaṁ bhāgavata-pravaro muniḥ

praṇipatyābhyanujñāto yayau tad-darśanotsavaḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having thus addressed Lord Kṛṣṇa, the chief of the Yadu dynasty, Nārada bowed down and offered Him obeisances. Then that great sage and most eminent devotee took his leave from the Lord and went away, feeling great joy at having directly seen Him.

|| 10.37.25 ||

bhagavān api govindo hatvā keśinam āhave

paśūn apālayat pālaiḥ prītair vraja-sukhāvahaḥ

TRANSLATION

After killing the demon Keśī in battle, the Supreme Personality of Godhead continued to tend the cows and other animals in the company of His joyful cowherd boyfriends. Thus He brought happiness to all the residents of Vṛndāvana.

|| 10.37.26 ||

ekadā te paśūn pālāś’ cārayanto ’dri-sānuṣu

cakrur nilāyana-krīḍāś cora-pālāpadeśataḥ

TRANSLATION

One day the cowherd boys, while grazing their animals on the mountain slopes, played the game of stealing and hiding, acting out the roles of rival thieves and herders.

COMMENTARY

The cowherd boys acted out hiding stolen objects as thieves and being the protectors of herds of sheep.

|| 10.37.27 ||

tatrāsan katicic corāḥ pālāś ca katicin nṛpa

meṣāyitāś ca tatraike vijahrur akuto-bhayāḥ

TRANSLATION

In that game, O King, some acted as thieves, others as shepherds and others as sheep. They played their game happily, without fear of danger.

COMMENTARY

They played without fear (*akutaḥ-bhayāḥ*) because the thieves, stolen objects, and the protectors all friends.

|| 10.37.28 ||

maya-putro mahā-māyo vyomo gopāla-veṣa-dhṛk

meṣāyitān apovāha prāyaś corāyito bahūn

TRANSLATION

A powerful magician named Vyoma, son of the demon Māyā, then appeared on the scene in the guise of a cowherd boy. Pretending to join the game as a thief, he proceeded to steal most of the cowherd boys who were acting as sheep.

COMMENTARY

Vyomāsura stole almost all of the cowherd boys acting as sheep.

|| 10.37.29 ||

giri-daryāṁ vinikṣipya nītaṁ nītaṁ mahāsuraḥ

śilayā pidadhe dvāraṁ catuḥ-pañcāvaśeṣitāḥ

TRANSLATION

Gradually the great demon abducted more and more of the cowherd boys and cast them into a mountain cave, which he sealed shut with a boulder. Finally only four or five boys acting as sheep remained in the game.

COMMENTARY

Finally only four or five boys playing sheep were left.

|| 10.37.30 ||

tasya tat karma vijñāya kṛṣṇaḥ śaraṇa-daḥ satām

gopān nayantaṁ jagrāha vṛkaṁ harir ivaujasā

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa, who shelters all saintly devotees, understood perfectly well what Vyomāsura was doing. Just as a lion grabs a wolf, Kṛṣṇa forcefully seized the demon as he was taking away more cowherd boys.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa caught Vyomāsura just as a lion (*harī*) attacks a wolf.

|| 10.37.31 ||

sa nijaṁ rūpam āsthāya girīndra-sadṛśaṁ balī

icchan vimoktum ātmānaṁ nāśaknod grahaṇāturaḥ

TRANSLATION

The demon changed into his original form, as big and powerful as a great mountain. But try as he might to free himself, he could not do so, having lost his strength from being held in the Lord’s tight grip.

|| 10.37.32 ||

taṁ nigṛhyācyuto dorbhyāṁ pātayitvā mahī-tale

paśyatāṁ divi devānāṁ paśu-māram amārayat

TRANSLATION

Lord Acyuta clutched Vyomāsura between His arms and threw him to the ground. Then, while the demigods in heaven looked on, Kṛṣṇa killed him in the same way that one kills a sacrificial animal.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa killed Vyomāsura in the same manner in which a sacrificial animal is slaughtered (*paśu-māram*), namely by suffocation through strangulation, just as Vyomāsura had tried to kill the cowherd boys by suffocation when he locked them in a cave.

|| 10.37.33 ||

guhā-pidhānaṁ nirbhidya gopān niḥsārya kṛcchrataḥ

stūyamānaḥ surair gopaiḥ praviveśa sva-gokulam

TRANSLATION

Kṛṣṇa then smashed the boulder blocking the cave's entrance and led the trapped cowherd boys to safety. Thereafter, as the demigods and cowherd boys sang His glories, He returned to His cowherd village, Gokula.

Thus ends the commentary on the Thirty seventh Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Thirty-eight

Akrūra’s Arrival in Vṛndāvana

|| 10.38.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

akrūro ’pi ca tāṁ rātriṁ madhu-puryāṁ mahā-matiḥ

uṣitvā ratham āsthāya prayayau nanda-gokulam

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: After passing the night in the city of Mathurā, the high-minded Akrūra mounted his chariot and set off for the cowherd village of Nanda Mahārāja.

COMMENTARY

This chapter describes how Kṛṣṇa fulfilled all the desires of Akrūra, and welcomed him with appropriate hospitality. King Kaṁsa ordered Keśī and Akrūra to go to Vraja on the Ekādaśī of the dark fortnight (Kṛṣṇa-pakṣa) of the Vedic month of Phālguna. The next morning, Keśī was killed in Vṛndāvana by Kṛṣṇa, Akrūra set off for Vraja, and Nārada praised Kṛṣṇa. In the afternoon, Vyomāsura was killed and at dusk Akrūra entered Vraja.

Tāṁ rātriṁ means the night of Ekādaśī. Akrūra is described as greatly intelligent (*mahā-matiḥ*) because he stayed up the whole night of Ekādaśī discussing the glories of Kṛṣṇa and worshiping Him. The next morning, without even breaking his Ekādaśī fast, Akrūra left Mathurā.

|| 10.38.2 ||

gacchan pathi mahā-bhāgo bhagavaty ambujekṣaṇe

bhaktiṁ parām upagata evam etad acintayat

TRANSLATION

As he traveled on the road, the great soul Akrūra felt tremendous devotion for the lotus-eyed Personality of Godhead, and thus he began to consider as follows.

|| 10.38.3 ||

kiṁ mayācaritaṁ bhadraṁ kiṁ taptaṁ paramaṁ tapaḥ

kiṁ vāthāpy arhate dattaṁ yad drakṣyāmy adya keśavam

TRANSLATION

[Śrī Akrūra thought:] What pious deeds have I done, what severe austerities undergone, what worship performed or charity given so that today I will see Lord Keśava?

COMMENTARY

Akrūra happily reflected, “What have I possibly done to be qualified to see the Lord?”

|| 10.38.4 ||

mamaitad durlabhaṁ manya uttamaḥ-śloka-darśanam

viṣayātmano yathā brahma-kīrtanaṁ śūdra-janmanaḥ

TRANSLATION

Since I am a materialistic person absorbed simply in sense gratification, I think it is as difficult for me to have gotten this opportunity to see Lord Uttamaḥśloka as it would be for one born a śūdra to be allowed to recite the Vedic mantras.

COMMENTARY

Overcome with humility, Akrūra thought, "It is rare that I, a materia-list absorbed in sense gratification, would get the chance to see the Lord, just as it is unusual for a born *śūdra* to recite the *Vedas*."

|| 10.38.5 ||

maivaṁ mamādhamasyāpi syād evācyuta-darśanam

hriyamāṇaḥ kala-nadyā kvacit tarati kaścana

TRANSLATION

But enough of such thoughts! After all, even a fallen soul like me can have the chance to behold the infallible Supreme Lord, for one of the conditioned souls being swept along in the river of time may sometimes reach the shore.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra subdued his humiliation by his intelligence and determina-tion, and thought, "Though I am low, it is possible (*syād evāhe*) for me to see the Lord."

|| 10.38.6 ||

mamādyāmaṅgalaṁ naṣṭaṁ phalavāṁś caiva me bhavaḥ

yan namasye bhagavato yogi-dhyeyāṅghri-paṅkajam

TRANSLATION

Today all my sinful reactions have been eradicated and my birth has become worthwhile, since I will offer my obeisances to the Supreme Lord's lotus feet, which mystic yogīs meditate upon.

COMMENTARY

Becoming more certain, Akrūra thought with confidence.

|| 10.38.7 ||

kaṁso batādyākṛta me 'ty-anugrahaṁ

drakṣye 'ṅghri-padmaṁ prahito 'munā hareḥ

kṛtāvatārasya duratyayaṁ tamaḥ

pūrve 'taran yan-nakha-maṇḍala-tviṣā

TRANSLATION

Indeed, today King Kaṁsa has shown me extreme mercy by sending me to see the lotus feet of Lord Hari, who has now appeared in this world. Simply by the effulgence of His toenails, many souls in the past have transcended the insurmountable darkness of material existence and achieved liberation.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra thought, "Furthermore, even though I have been ordered to do this by Kaṁsa, who hates Kṛṣṇa, I have actually gotten a very favorable result. Amazingly, even though Kaṁsa is an envious rascal, today he has been especially merciful to me, because he has sent me to see Kṛṣṇa. Previously such persons as Ambarīṣa were delivered from the material world by one ray of the effulgent lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa."

|| 10.38.8 ||

yad arcitaṁ brahma-bhavādibhiḥ suraiḥ

śriyā ca devyā munibhiḥ sa-sātvataiḥ

go-cāraṇāyānucaraiś carad vane

yad gopīkānāṁ kuca-kuṅkumāṅkitam

TRANSLATION

Those lotus feet are worshiped by Brahmā, Śiva and all the other demigods, by the goddess of fortune, and also by the great sages and Vaiṣṇavas. Upon those lotus feet the Lord walks about the forest while herding the cows with His companions, and those feet are smeared with the kuṅkuma from the gopīs' breasts.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra thought, “Today, I will see those lotus feet, which are worshiped by Brahmā, Śiva and other chief demigods with incessant offerings of flowers, scents and ghee; which follow after the cows along with His companions, and which relish the remnants of *kunkuma* from the breasts of the *gopīs*.”

One should not object that it is *rasābhāsa* (incompatible overlapping of mellows) for Akrūra, who is in *dāsya-bhāva*, to taste the conjugal mellow (*mādhurya-rasa*) of his master Śrī Kṛṣṇa. After all, Akrūra is only thinking these things within himself. It is often seen that parents and other relatives enthusiastically take pleasure within their own minds in the conjugal enjoyments of their own children.

|| 10.38.9 ||

drakṣyāmi nūnaṁ su-kapola-nāsikaṁ

smitāvalokāruṇa-kañja-locanam

mukhaṁ mukundasya guḍālakāvṛtaṁ

pradakṣiṇaṁ me pracaranti vai mṛgāḥ

TRANSLATION

Surely I shall see the face of Lord Mukunda, since the deer are now walking past me on my right. That face, framed by His curly hair, is beautified by His attractive cheeks and nose, His smiling glances and His reddish lotus eyes.

COMMENTARY

Seeing the auspicious omen of a deer, Akrūra ascertains the sure fulfillment of his desire in this verse. Akrūra thought, “It is sure that I will see Kṛṣṇa’s smiling face surrounded by His curly locks, lotus eyes, sweet glance, beautiful cheeks and nose.”

|| 10.38.10 ||

apy adya viṣṇor manujatvam īyuṣo

bhārāvatārāya bhuvo nijecchayā

lāvaṇya-dhāmno bhavitopalambhanaṁ

mahyaṁ na na syāt phalam añjasā dṛśaḥ

TRANSLATION

I am going to see the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu, the reservoir of all beauty, who by His own sweet will has now assumed a humanlike form to relieve the earth of her burden. Thus there is no denying that my eyes will achieve the perfection of their existence.

COMMENTARY

"But," one may object, "Even demons get Kṛṣṇa's *darsana*, so why do you praise your own good fortune in this matter?"

Akrūra thought, "Now, Viṣṇu, whose extraordinary beauty I am realizing in my heart, has appeared by His sweet will within our own dynasty of Vaivasvata Manu (*manujatvam*). The demons may see Him, but they do not perceive His sweetness. Will my eyes not become successful today? Certainly they will."

|| 10.38.11 ||

ya īkṣitāhaṁ-rahito 'py asat-satoḥ sva-tejasāpāsta-tamo-bhidā-bhramaḥ

sva-māyayātman racitais tad-īkṣayā prāṇākṣa-dhībhiḥ sadaneṣv abhīyate

TRANSLATION

He is the witness of material cause and effect, yet He is always free from false identification with them. By His internal potency He dispels the darkness of separation and confusion. The individual souls in this world, who are manifested here when He glances upon His material creative energy, indirectly perceive Him in the activities of their life airs, senses and intelligence.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra thought, "Now one can see the beautiful human-like form of Kṛṣṇa in Nandagrāma, whereas persons like myself perceive Kṛṣṇa always and everywhere in His form as the indwelling supreme controller. The Supersoul witnesses the good and bad actions of all living entities, yet He is devoid of the false ego of thinking, "I am seeing." The living entity on the other hand is a seer who has the false ego of identifying with his body. The Supersoul, however, who sits within the body as the constant observer, does not identify with the material body."

"How can we distinguish between being free of false ego and being afflicted by it? One may object, 'If a living entity is situated in a body, he will encounter the unhappiness and confusion that occur within it, just as a person living in a house, whether he be attached to it or not, cannot avoid experiencing the darkness, warmth and cold that occur within it.' This objection is answered as follows: By His internal potency Kṛṣṇa

dispels the darkness of ignorance along with the separateness and bewilderment it produces."

"That Supersoul, who by His personal potency (*sva-tejasā*) has manifested the vital airs, senses and intelligence within the individual souls, is perceived by these faculties as being their creator. Furthermore, it has been said, *guṇa-prakāśair anumīyate bhavān*, "One can realize the beauty of Your form by the awakening of transcendental knowledge." (SB 10.2.35)

|| 10.38.12 ||

yasyākhilāmīva-habhiḥ su-maṅgalaiḥ vāco vimiśrā guṇa-karma-janmabhiḥ

prāṇanti śumbhanti punanti vai jagat yās tad-viraktāḥ śava-śobhanā matāḥ

TRANSLATION

All sins are destroyed and all good fortune is created by the Supreme Lord's qualities, activities and appearances, and words that describe these three things animate, beautify and purify the world. On the other hand, words bereft of His glories are like the decorations on a corpse.

COMMENTARY

Glorification of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa delivers the world. Poetic composi-tions about Kṛṣṇa's birth, qualities and activities destroy the sins of all people, give life to the reciter and listener, endow a person with good qualities such as mercy and freedom from illusion, and purify one from the fault of ignorance. On the other hand, those words which do not describe Kṛṣṇa's birth, activities and qualities, though they may be endowed with good literary qualities and ornaments, are simply like the ornaments decorating a dead body.

|| 10.38.13 ||

sa cāvatīrṇaḥ kila satvatānvaye sva-setu-pālāmara-varya-śarma-kṛt

yaśo vitanvan vraja āsta īśvaro gāyanti devā yad aśeṣa-maṅgalam

TRANSLATION

That same Supreme Lord has descended into the dynasty of the Sātvatas to delight the exalted demigods, who maintain the principles of religion He has created. Residing in Vṛndāvana, He spreads His fame, which the demigods glorify in song and which brings auspiciousness to all.

COMMENTARY

Yat means “which fame.”

|| 10.38.14 ||

taṁ tv adya nūnaṁ mahatāṁ gatiṁ guruṁ

trailokya-kāntaṁ dṛśiman-mahotsavam

rūpaṁ dadhānaṁ śriya īpsitāspadaṁ

drakṣye mamāsann uṣasaḥ su-darśanāḥ

TRANSLATION

Today I shall certainly see Him, the goal and spiritual master of the great souls. Seeing Him brings jubilation to all who have eyes, for He is the true beauty of the universe. Indeed, His personal form is the shelter desired by the goddess of fortune. Now all the dawns of my life have become auspicious.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra considered, “Today my eyes will relish a veritable festival of bliss. I will see Śrī Kṛṣṇa whose form is the reservoir of the conjugal attractions of the *rāsa* dance, and aspired for by the goddess of fortune who forever resides on Viṣṇu’s chest. The mornings following many nights have brought auspiciousness for me.” Otherwise, it is implied, “Without so many sleepless nights, this fruit would never have come about.”

|| 10.38.15 ||

athāvarūḍhaḥ sapadīśayo rathāt

pradhāna-puṁsoś caraṇaṁ sva-labdhaye

dhiyā dhṛtaṁ yogibhir apy ahaṁ dhruvaṁ
namasya ābhyāṁ ca sakhīn vanaukasaḥ

TRANSLATION

Then I will at once alight from my chariot and bow down to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, the Supreme Personalities of Godhead. Theirs are the same feet that great mystic yogīs striving for self-realization bear within their minds. I will also offer my obeisances to the Lords’ cowherd boyfriends and to all the other residents of Vṛndāvana.

COMMENTARY

Akrīra thought, “As soon as I see Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, I will immediately jump off my chariot, bow down and hold on to Their lotus feet, which yogis embrace only with their intelligence in the course of self realization. I will also bow down to the companions of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, and to all the residents of Vraja.”

|| 10.38.16 ||

apy aṅghri-mūle patitasya me vibhuḥ śirasy adhāsyan nija-hasta-paṅkajam

dattābhayaṁ kāla-bhujāṅga-raṁhasā prodvejitānāṁ śaraṇaiṣiṇāṁ ṇṛnām

TRANSLATION

And when I have fallen at His feet, the almighty Lord will place His lotus hand upon my head. For those who seek shelter in Him because they are greatly disturbed by the powerful serpent of time, that hand removes all fear.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra thought, “And (*api*) Kṛṣṇa will place (*adhāsyan*) His lotus hand, which bestows fearlessness (*datta-ābhavaṁ*) upon all living entities, on my head.”

|| 10.38.17 ||

samarhaṇaṁ yatra nidhāya kauśikas tathā baliś cāpa jagat-trayendratām

yad vā vihāre vraja-yoṣitāṁ śramaṁ sparśena saugandhika-gandhy apānudat

TRANSLATION

By offering charity to that lotus hand, Purandara and Bali earned the status of Indra, King of heaven, and during the pleasure pastimes of the rāsa dance, when the Lord wiped away the gopīs’ perspiration and removed their fatigue, the touch of their faces made that hand as fragrant as a sweet flower.

COMMENTARY

By offering water to symbolize one's intention (*saṅkalpa*) to give charity, Purandara (*kausika*) and Bali perfectly worshiped (*arhyate: pujyate*) that hand and attained the post of Indra to rule over the three worlds. The offerings of water into the Lord's hand were performed by Purandara during the *avatāra* of Sārvabhauma and by Bali during the *avatāra* of Vāmanadeva. Thus Purandara became Indra and Bali will attain the post in the future.

At the time of the *rāsa* dance, Kṛṣṇa used His lotus hand to wipe away the drops of perspiration from the limbs of the *gopīs*, which had arisen from the fatigue of enjoyment. This is stated in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.33.20). This subtly indicates that just as Kṛṣṇa lotus feet, although worshiped by Brahmā and other demigods, carry the remnants of *kuṅkuma* from the *gopīs*' breasts, similarly His lotus hands, even though worshiped by such personalities as Indra and Bali, performed the service of wiping away the perspiration from the faces of *gopīs*. Such is the super excellence of the sweet mood of the Vraja-gopīs.

What is the nature of Kṛṣṇa's lotus hand? The *Purāṇas* call the lotus found in the Mānasa-sarovara Lake a *saugandhika*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa's hand acquired the aroma of this flower by touching the beautiful, fragrant faces of the *gopīs*. Though Akrura was a *dāsya-bhakta*, because he is speaking to himself there is no *rasābhāsa*.

|| 10.38.18 ||

na mayy upaiṣyaty ari-buddhim acyutaḥ kaṁsasya dūtaḥ prahito 'pi viśva-dṛk

yo 'ntar bahiś cetasa etad īhitaṁ kṣetra-jña īkṣaty amalena cakṣuṣā

TRANSLATION

The infallible Lord will not consider me an enemy, even though Kaṁsa has sent me here as his messenger. After all, the omniscient Lord is the actual knower of the field of this material body, and with His perfect vision He witnesses, both externally and internally, all the endeavors of the conditioned soul's heart.

COMMENTARY

Though all this is true, Akrūra still feared that it would be impossible to get Kṛṣṇa's mercy. Therefore he refutes this idea with this verse. Akrūra thought, "Though I am Kaṁsa's messenger and have been sent by him, Kṛṣṇa will understand that I am not His

enemy, because He is present both outside and inside my heart. Kṛṣṇa witnesses not only my activities, but the activities of everyone in the universe."

|| 10.38.19 ||

apy aṅghri-mūle 'vahitaṁ kṛtāñjaliṁ māṁ īkṣitā sa-smitam ārdrayā dṛśā

sapady apadhvasta-samasta-kilbiṣo voḍhā mudaṁ vīta-viśaṅka ūrjitām

TRANSLATION

Thus He will cast His smiling, affectionate glance upon me as I remain fixed with joined palms, fallen in obeisances at His feet. Then all my contamination will at once be dispelled, and I will give up all doubts and feel the most intense bliss.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra thought, "Will Kṛṣṇa not glance at me with eyes moistened with the nectar of His mercy as I fervently offer respects at His lotus feet? Immediately I will achieve unlimited bliss and all fear will disappear, because the Lord certainly knows my heart."

|| 10.38.20 ||

suhṛttamaṁ jñātim ananya-daivataṁ
dorbhyāṁ bṛhadbhyāṁ parirapsyate 'tha māṁ

ātmā hi tīrthī-kriyate tadaiva me

bandhaś ca karmātmaka ucchvasity ataḥ

TRANSLATION

Recognizing me as an intimate friend and relative, Kṛṣṇa will embrace me with His mighty arms, instantly sanctifying my body and diminishing to nil all my material bondage, which is due to fruitive activities.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra thought, "Kṛṣṇa will embrace me because we are best of friends, and also because we are relatives (*jñātim*). Among relatives, I am imbued with a mood of

exclusive servitude (*ananya-daivatam: aikāntika-dāsyavantam*) toward Him. By Kṛṣṇa's embrace my body (*ātmā*) will become pure and act as a holy tīrtha to purify others. Afterwards, I will become liberated from material existence."

|| 10.38.21 ||

labdhvāṅga-saṅgam praṇatam kṛtāñjaliṁ

māṁ vakṣyate 'krūra tatety uruśravāḥ

tadā vayaṁ janma-bhṛto mahīyasā

naivādṛto yo dhig amuṣya janma tat

TRANSLATION

Having been embraced by the all-famous Lord Kṛṣṇa, I will humbly stand before Him with bowed head and joined palms, and He will address me, "My dear Akrūra." At that very moment my life's purpose will be fulfilled. Indeed, the life of anyone whom the Supreme Personality fails to recognize is simply pitiable.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra thought, "When Kṛṣṇa calls out to me, 'O uncle!' my life will become successful. Otherwise my life is useless. Indeed, one is truly unfortunate if he is not respected by great persons."

|| 10.38.22 ||

na tasya kaścid dayitaḥ suhṛttamo na cāpriyo dveṣya upekṣya eva vā

tathāpi bhaktān bhajate yathā tathā sura-drumo yadvad upāśrito 'rtha-daḥ

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord has no favorite and no dearmost friend, nor does He consider anyone undesirable, despicable or fit to be neglected. All the same, He lovingly reciprocates with His devotees in whatever manner they worship Him, just as the trees of heaven fulfill the desires of whoever approaches them.

COMMENTARY

Someone may object, "The Supreme Lord should be equal to all at all times. Why should He show special friendship to someone like you?" Akrūra responds to this objection in

this verse: “Though Kṛṣṇa is neither a dear friend nor enemy of anyone, still He reciprocates with His devotees,’’ as stated in His own words in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.29):

> *samo ’haṁ sarva-bhūteṣu na me dveṣyo ’sti na priyaḥ*
>
> *ye bhajanti tu māṁ bhaktyā mayi te teṣu cāpy aham*
>
> “I envy no one, nor am I partial to anyone. I am equal to all. But whoever renders service unto Me in devotion is a friend and is in Me, and I am also a friend to him.”

The words *yathā tathā* mean that Kṛṣṇa responds to His devotees according to how they worship Him. This is in accordance with Kṛṣṇa’s statement: *ye yathā māṁ prapadyante, tāṁs tathaiva bhajāmy aham*, “As all surrender unto Me, I reward them accordingly.” (Bg. 4.11)

The words *sura-drumo yadvad* (like a heavenly desire tree) indicate how the various degrees of fruits awarded correspond to the various degrees of shelter taken. As there is no discrepancy if the *kalpa-vṛkṣa* (desire tree) does not give fruits to a person who does not take shelter of it, similarly it is so in the case of the Supreme Lord. However, whereas the Lord is dependent upon His surrendered devotees, the *kalpa-vṛkṣa* is not dependent on those who take shelter of it. Therefore according to the devotion, Kṛṣṇa shows friendship, enmity or neutrality. For example, Kṛṣṇa showed friendship to Ambarīṣa and enmity or indifference to the envious Durvāsā.

|| 10.38.23 ||

kiṁ cāgrajo māvanataṁ yadūttamaḥ

smayan pariṣvajya gṛhītam añjalau

gṛhaṁ praveśyāpta-samasta-satkṛtaṁ

samprakṣyate kaṁsa-kṛtaṁ sva-bandhuṣu

TRANSLATION

And then Lord Kṛṣṇa’s elder brother, the foremost of the Yadus, will grasp my joined hands while I am still standing with my head bowed, and after embracing me He will take me to His house. There He will honor me with all items of ritual

welcome and inquire from me about how Kaṁsa has been treating His family members.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra considered, “Will Kṛṣṇa’s elder brother Balarāma clasp my folded palms with His right hand and lead me into His house to speak privately? After finishing His acts of hospitality (*sat-kṛtam*), Balarāma will inquire about how Kaṁsa has been treating his family members.”

|| 10.38.24 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

iti sañcintayan kṛṣṇaṁ śvaphalka-tanayo ’dhvani

rathena gokulaṁ prāptaḥ sūryaś cāsta-giriṁ nṛpa

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: My dear King, while the son of Śvaphalka, traveling on the road, thus meditated deeply on Śrī Kṛṣṇa, he reached Gokula as the sun was beginning to set.

|| 10.38.25 ||

padāni tasyākhila-loka-pāla- kirīṭa-juṣṭāmala-pāda-reṇoḥ

dadarśa goṣṭhe kṣiti-kautukāni vilakṣitāny abja-yavāṅkuśādyaiḥ

TRANSLATION

In the cowherd pasture Akrūra saw the footprints of those feet whose pure dust the rulers of all the planets in the universe hold on their crowns. Those footprints of the Lord, distinguished by such marks as the lotus, barleycorn and elephant goad, made the ground wonderfully beautiful.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra saw Kṛṣṇa’s footprints (*padāni*) marked with an elephant goad, barleycorn and thunderbolt, which brought astonishing good fortune (*kautakāni:sa-vismaya-saubhagyam*) to the earth (*kṣiti*).

|| 10.38.26 ||

tad-darśanāhlāda-vivṛddha-sambhramaḥ
premṇordhva-romāśru-kalākulekṣaṇaḥ

rathād avaskandya sa teṣv aceṣṭata

prabhor amūny aṅghri-rajāṁsy aho iti

TRANSLATION

Increasingly agitated by ecstasy at seeing the Lord's footprints, his bodily hairs standing on end because of his pure love, and his eyes filled with tears, Akrūra jumped down from his chariot and began rolling about among those footprints, exclaiming, "Ah, this is the dust from my master's feet!"

COMMENTARY

Seeing Kṛṣṇa's footprints, Akrūra's eyes flooded with teardrops (*aṣru-kalā*), and he jumped from the chariot. Rolling (*aceṣṭata*) in the dust of those footprints while weeping with a choked voice, Akrūra said, "What fortune to attain such rare things!"

|| 10.38.27 ||

dehaṁ-bhṛtām iyān artho hitvā dambhaṁ bhiyaṁ śucam

sandeśād yo harer liṅga-darśana-śravaṇādibhiḥ

TRANSLATION

The very goal of life for all embodied beings is this ecstasy, which Akrūra experienced when, upon receiving Kaṁsa's order, he put aside all pride, fear and lamentation and absorbed himself in seeing, hearing and describing the things that reminded him of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

After describing the actions of Akrūra's body, words and mind from the start of his journey in Mathurā up to his entrance in Vraja, this verse presents the essential philosophical conclusion which is an example for all. Akrūra gave up all false pride by rolling in Kṛṣṇa's foot dust. This is the goal of human life.

Instantly upon seeing Kṛṣṇa's footprints, Akrūra rolled about in the dust at that very spot, and thus gave up the pride (*hitvā dambhaṁ*) of thinking, "I am Akrūra, King Kaṁsa's minister. Since I am so greatly honored by the King, how can I roll about in the dust of the feet of a mere cowherd boy?" By openly showing his love and reverence for Kṛṣṇa, Akrīra gave up his fear (*hitvā bhiyaṁ*) of punishment by Kaṁsa, who might be angrily complaining, "Even though Akrūra is my messenger, he is rolling about in the dust of the feet of my enemy Kṛṣṇa!" Akrūra gave up the sorrow (*hitvā śucam*) of lamenting for his wife, children and home, who might be destroyed by the angry Kaṁsa. Forsaking all these things, Akrūra rolled in the dust of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet.

Giving up fear (*hitvā bhiyaṁ*) can also mean giving up the fear of criticism from friends. Giving up lamentation (*hitvā śucam*) can mean giving up the following considerations: "We, being scholarly, aristocratic and well-to-do, are superior to others. How can we fall down in the dust of the Vaiṣṇavas' feet, who are disrespected by society, poorly dressed and penniless?" He also gave up the fear of being condemned by his own family and the sorrow of being abandoned by them for falling down in the dust of the feet of a Vaiṣṇava, who is the representative of Lord Hari. Or else, the phrase "giving up pride" (*hitvā dambhaṁ*) applies to the conditioned souls in general and not to Akrūra, since he is overwhelmed in pure ecstatic love of Kṛṣṇa.

By hearing and remembering the glories of Hari that he had heard from Nārada, Akrūra expressed an intense desire to serve Kṛṣṇa in the loving mood of servitude (*dāsya-rasa*). Similarly, a devotee should think, "When will I serve Kṛṣṇa in this way, and when will I get the good fortune to see My beloved Lord?"

|| 10.38.28-33 ||

dadarśa kṛṣṇaṁ rāmaṁ ca vraje go-dohanaṁ gatau

pīta-nīlāmbara-dharau śarad-amburahekṣaṇau

kiśorau śyāmala-śvetau śrī-niketau bṛhad-bhujau

su-mukhau sundara-varau bala-dvirada-vikramau

dhvaja-vajrāṅkuśāmbhojaiś cihnitair aṅghribhir vrajam

śobhayantau mahātmānau sānukrośa-smitekṣaṇau

udāra-rucira-krīḍau sragviṇau vana-mālinau

puṇya-gandhānuliptāṅgau snātau viraja-vāsasau

pradhāna-puruṣāv ādyau jagad-dhetū jagat-patī

avatīrṇau jagaty-arthe svāṁśena bala-keśavau

diśo vitimirā rājan kurvāṇau prabhayā svayā

yathā mārakataḥ śailo raupyaś ca kanakācitau

TRANSLATION

Akrūra then saw Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma in the village of Vraja, going to milk the cows. Kṛṣṇa wore yellow garments, Balarāma blue, and Their eyes resembled autumnal lotuses. One of those two mighty-armed youths, the shelters of the goddess of fortune, had a dark-blue complexion, and the other's was white. With Their fine-featured faces They were the most beautiful of all persons. As They walked with the gait of young elephants, glancing about with compassionate smiles, Those two exalted personalities beautified the cow pasture with the impressions of Their feet, which bore the marks of the flag, lightning bolt, elephant goad and lotus. The two Lords, whose pastimes are most magnanimous and attractive, were ornamented with jeweled necklaces and flower garlands, anointed with auspicious, fragrant substances, freshly bathed, and dressed in spotless raiment. They were the primeval Supreme Personalities, the masters and original causes of the universes, who had for the welfare of the earth now descended in Their distinct forms of Keśava and Balarāma. O King Parīkṣit, They resembled two gold-bedecked mountains, one of emerald and the other of silver, as with Their effulgence They dispelled the sky's darkness in all directions.

COMMENTARY

(Texts 28-30) Akrúra saw the highly exalted Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, whose glances were smiling with compassion, at the place where the cows were milked. Or he saw Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma engaged in milking the cows.

(Texts 31-33) *Pradhāna-puruṣāu* means those two exalted persons, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, appeared as incarnations within matter (*pradhāna*). They divided up (*sva-aṁśena*) the work of protecting the earth. Thus Kṛṣṇa killed Agha and Baka, whereas Balarāma killed Dhenuka and Pralamba. Kṛṣṇa killed Cāṇūra and Kaṁsa, whereas Balarāma killed Muṣṭika and Dvivida.

|| 10.38.34 ||

rathāt tūrṇam avaplutya so 'krūraḥ sneha-vihvalaḥ

papāta caraṇopānte daṇḍa-vad rāma-kṛṣṇayoḥ

TRANSLATION

Akrūra, overwhelmed with affection, quickly jumped down from his chariot and fell at the feet of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma like a rod.

|| 10.38.35 ||

bhagavad-darśanāhlāda-bāṣpa-paryākulekṣaṇaḥ

pulakacitāṅga autkaṇṭhyāt svākhyāne nāśakan nṛpa

TRANSLATION

The joy of seeing the Supreme Lord flooded Akrūra's eyes with tears and decorated his limbs with eruptions of ecstasy. He felt such eagerness that he could not speak to present himself, O King.

COMMENTARY

Due to ecstatic rapture, Akrūra could not introduce himself properly, saying, "I, Akrūra, offer my respects to You."

|| 10.38.36 ||

bhagavāṁs tam abhipretya rathāṅgāṅkita-pāṇinā

parirebhe 'bhyupākṛṣya prītaḥ praṇata-vatsalaḥ

TRANSLATION

Recognizing Akrūra, Lord Kṛṣṇa drew him close with His hand, which bears the sign of the chariot wheel, and then embraced him. Kṛṣṇa felt pleased, for He is always benignly disposed toward His surrendered devotees.

COMMENTARY

Knowing the purpose (*abhipretya*) for which Akrūra had come, Kṛṣṇa used His hand, marked with the sign of a chariot wheel (*rathāṅgāṅkita*), to pull Akrūra near Himself. By extending His hand marked with the chariot wheel, or *cakra*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa indicated to Akrūra His ability to kill Kaṁsa.

|| 10.38.37-38 ||

saṅkarṣaṇaś ca praṇatam upaguhya mahā-manāḥ

gṛhītvā pāṇinā pāṇī anayat sānujo gṛham

pṛṣṭvātha sv-āgataṁ tasmai nivedya ca varāsanam

prakṣālya vidhi-vat pādau madhu-parkārhaṇam āharat

TRANSLATION

As Akrūra stood with his head bowed, Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa [Balarāma] grasped his joined hands, and then Balarāma took him to His house in the company of Lord Kṛṣṇa. After inquiring from Akrūra whether his trip had been comfortable, Balarāma offered him a first-class seat, bathed his feet in accordance with the injunctions of scripture and respectfully served him milk with honey.

COMMENTARY

With His right hand Balarāma held Akrūra's folded hands, just as Akrūra had previously desired in verse twenty-three.

|| 10.38.39 ||

nivedya gāṁ cātithaye saṁvāhya śrāntam āḍṛtaḥ

annaṁ bahu-guṇaṁ medhyaṁ śraddhayopāharad vibhuḥ

TRANSLATION

The almighty Lord Balarāma presented Akrūra with the gift of a cow, massaged his feet to relieve him of fatigue and then with great respect and faith fed him suitably prepared food of various fine tastes.

COMMENTARY

Offering a cow was among the various *upacāras* or items of worship, such as pouring water over the guest's feet. In order to give pleasure to the eyes of one's guest, a beautiful cow is brought forward with the thought: "Please look upon this cow. She is yours." The word *medhyaṁ* means appropriate for the Dvādaśī breakfast. In other words, rice was taken on Dvādaśī to break the Ekādaśī *vrata*.

Kaṁsa was killed two days later on Caturdaśī, on the occasion of worshiping Bhūtarāja Lord Śiva. There is a rule that one should not break a fast during the night, but Akrūra broke the rule because of his eagerness to receive food (*annaṁ bahu-guṇaṁin*, grains of various tastes) in Kṛṣṇa's home.

|| 10.38.40 ||

tasmai bhuktavate prītyā rāmaḥ parama-dharma-vit

makha-vāsair gandha-mālyaiḥ parāṁ prītiṁ vyadhāt punaḥ

TRANSLATION

When Akrūra had eaten to his satisfaction, Lord Balarāma, the supreme knower of religious duties, offered him aromatic herbs for sweetening his mouth, along with fragrances and flower garlands. Thus Akrūra once again enjoyed the highest pleasure.

|| 10.38.41 ||

papraccha sat-kṛtaṁ nandaḥ kathaṁ stha niranugrahe

kaṁse jīvati dāśārha sauna-pālā ivāvayaḥ

TRANSLATION

Nanda Mahārāja asked Akrūra: O descendant of Daśārha, how are all of you maintaining yourselves while that merciless Kaṁsa remains alive? You are just like sheep under the care of a butcher.

COMMENTARY

Nanda Mahārāja asked, “How are you living (*stha:jīvatha*)? You are like sheep whose keeper is a killer of animals. You do not know when you will all be killed.”

|| 10.38.42 ||

yo ’vadhīt sva-svasus tokān krośantyā asu-tṛp khalaḥ

kiṁ nu svit tat-prajānāṁ vaḥ kuśalaṁ vimṛśāmahe

TRANSLATION

That cruel, self-serving Kaṁsa murdered the infants of his own sister in her presence, even as she cried in anguish. So why should we even ask about the well-being of you, his subjects?

COMMENTARY

Nanda Mahārāja said, “How can one consider asking about the welfare of those who are dependent on one who kills his sister’s baby (*tokān*)?”

|| 10.38.43 ||

itthaṁ sūnṛtayā vācā nandena su-sabhājitaḥ

akrūraḥ paripṛṣṭena jahāv adhva-pariśramam

TRANSLATION

Honored by Nanda Mahārāja with these true and pleasing words of inquiry, Akrūra forgot the fatigue of his journey.

COMMENTARY

Being treated hospitably as a guest with gentle questions, Akrūra gave up his doubt about obtaining Kṛṣṇa’s mercy, and the anxiety due to suffering from that doubt.

Thus ends the commentary on the Thirty eighth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Thirty-nine

Akrūra's Vision

|| 10.39.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

sukhopaviṣṭaḥ paryaṅke rāma-kṛṣṇoru-mānitaḥ

lebhe manorathān sarvān pathi yān sa cakāra ha

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having been honored so much by Lord Balarāma and Lord Kṛṣṇa, Akrūra, seated comfortably on a couch, felt that all the desires he had contemplated on the road were now fulfilled.

COMMENTARY

This chapter describes how the *gopīs,* being very disturbed over Kṛṣṇa's departure for Mathurā, conversed among themselves. Akrūra saw Vaikuṇṭha after submerging himself in the Yamunā.

|| 10.39.2 ||

kim alabhyaṁ bhagavati prasanne śrī-niketane

tathāpi tat-parā rājan na hi vāñchanti kiñcana

TRANSLATION

My dear King, what is unattainable for one who has satisfied the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the shelter of the goddess of fortune? Even so, those who are dedicated to His devotional service never want anything from Him.

COMMENTARY

"Why did Akrūra only desire to see and touch Kṛṣṇa, and not desire to attain Brahman or *sāyujya-muktī*?" This verse answers the question. If Kṛṣṇa, who is the shelter of Lakṣmī, the goddess of all wealth, who resides in the form of a golden line on His chest, is pleased what more could one desire?

|| 10.39.3 ||

sāyantanāśanaṁ kṛtvā bhagavān devakī-sutaḥ

suhṛtsu vṛttaṁ kaṁsasya papracchānyac cikīrṣitam

TRANSLATION

After the evening meal, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī, asked Akrūra how Kaṁsa was treating their dear relatives and friends and what the King was planning to do.

|| 10.39.4 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

tāta saumyāgataḥ kaccit sv-āgataṁ bhadram astu vaḥ

api sva-jñāti-bandhūnām anamīvam anāmayam

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord said: My dear, gentle Uncle Akrūra, was your trip here comfortable? May all good fortune be yours. Are our well-wishing friends and our relatives, both close and distant, happy and in good health?

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa asked, “O uncle! O gentle one, did you have a comfortable journey? Are all your relatives free from disease (*anāmayam*) and the sadness of sinful reactions (*amīvam:pāpam:duḥkham*).

Sva indicates well-wishing friends. The word *jñāti* indicates relatives belonging to seven future and past generations of the father’s and mother’s families. *Jñātis* are *sa-piṇḍa* relatives, which means that they are so close that they offer *piṇḍa* (oblations) to the forefathers. *Bandhu* indicates those without direct kinship.

|| 10.39.5 ||

kiṁ nu naḥ kuśalaṁ pṛcche edhamāne kulāmaye

kaṁse mātula-nāmnāṅga svānāṁ nas tat-prajāsu ca

TRANSLATION

But, my dear Akrūra, as long as King Kaṁsa—that disease of our family who goes by the name “maternal uncle”—is still prospering, why should I even bother to ask about the well-being of our family members and his other subjects?

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “O Akrūra, it is not very appropriate to even ask about their well-being. How can I ask about the welfare of our relatives when Kaṁsa, the disease of our family who goes by the name of “maternal uncle” is still alive?”

|| 10.39.6 ||

aho asmad abhūd bhūri pitror vṛjinam āryayoḥ

yad-dhetoḥ putra-maraṇaṁ yad-dhetor bandhanaṁ tayoḥ

TRANSLATION

Just see how much suffering I have caused My offenseless parents! Because of Me their sons were killed and they themselves imprisoned.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “Because of Me, their son (*āsmat*), they have suffered unhappiness (*vṛjinam*). Though I am their son, I have caused their sons to be killed.”

|| 10.39.7 ||

diṣṭyādya darśanaṁ svānāṁ mahyaṁ vaḥ saumya kāṅkṣitam

sañjātaṁ varṇyatāṁ tāta tavāgamana-kāraṇam

TRANSLATION

By good fortune We have today fulfilled Our desire to see you, Our dear relative. O gentle uncle, please tell Us why you have come.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “I have desired to see you for a long time. After seeing you I have received a good reason for going to Mathurā to kill Kaṁsa.”

|| 10.39.8 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

pṛṣṭo bhagavatā sarvaṁ varṇayām āsa mādhavaḥ

vairānubandhaṁ yaduṣu Vāsudeva-vadhodyamam

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: In response to the Supreme Lord’s request, Akrūra, the descendant of Madhu, described the whole situation, including King Kaṁsa’s enmity toward the Yadus and his attempt to murder Vāsudeva.

COMMENTARY

Mādhava here indicates Akrūra of the Madhu dynasty. Kṛṣṇa asked him about the events in Mathurā.

|| 10.39.9 ||

yat-sandeśo yad-arthaṁ vā dūtaḥ sampreṣitaḥ svayam

yad uktaṁ nāradenāsya sva-janmānakadundubheḥ

TRANSLATION

Akrūra relayed the message he had been sent to deliver. He also described Kaṁsa's real intentions and how Nārada had informed Kaṁsa that Kṛṣṇa had been born as the son of Vāsudeva.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra described how he was sent to invite Kṛṣṇa to the Dhanur-yajña so that He would be killed by Cāṇūra.

|| 10.39.10 ||

śrutvākrūra-vacaḥ kṛṣṇo balaś ca para-vīra-hā

prahasya nandaṁ pitaraṁ rājñā diṣṭaṁ vijajñatuḥ

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Balarāma, the vanquisher of heroic opponents, laughed when They heard Akrūra's words. The Lords then informed Their father, Nanda Mahārāja, of King Kaṁsa's orders.

COMMENTARY

The laughing (*prahasya*) of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma indicated that Kaṁsa's plan of inviting Them to Mathurā would bring about Kaṁsa's own death. Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma told Nanda Mahārāja about the King's invitation to attend the Dhanur-yajña, but They did not inform him about the more confidential matters.

|| 10.39.11-12 ||

gopān samādiśat so 'pi gṛhyatāṁ sarva-go-rasaḥ

upāyanāni gṛhṇīdhvaṁ yujyantāṁ śakaṭāni ca

yāsyāmaḥ śvo madhu-purīṁ dāsyāmo nṛpate rasān

drakṣyāmaḥ su-mahat parva yānti jānapadāḥ kila

evam āghoṣayat kṣatrā nanda-gopaḥ sva-gokule

TRANSLATION

Nanda Mahārāja then issued orders to the cowherd men by having the village constable make the following announcement throughout Nanda's domain of Vraja: "Go collect all the available milk products. Bring valuable gifts and yoke your wagons. Tomorrow we shall go to Mathurā, present our milk products to the King and see a very great festival. The residents of all the outlying districts are also going."

COMMENTARY

Nanda(*sah*) issued an order to the cowherd men: "We will pay taxes to the king with ghee (*rasān*). Since all the residents of the districts surrounding the city are going, what do we have to worry about." Nanda then sent one of his security officers (*kṣatrā*) to inform everyone in Vraja.

|| 10.39.13 ||

gopyas tās tad upaśrutya babhūvur vyathitā bhṛśam

rāma-kṛṣṇau purīṁ netum akrūraṁ vrajam āgatam

TRANSLATION

When the young gopīs heard that Akrūra had come to Vraja to take Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma to the city, they became extremely distressed.

COMMENTARY

Then (*tat*) the famous *gopīs*, whose life and soul was Kṛṣṇa, heard that Akrūra had come to take Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma to Mathurā.

|| 10.39.14 ||

kāścit tat-kṛta-hṛt-tāpa śvāsa-mlāna-mukha-śriyaḥ

sraṁsad-dukūla-valaya keśa-granthyaś ca kāścana

TRANSLATION

Some gopīs felt so pained at heart that their faces turned pale from their heavy breathing. Others were so anguished that their dresses, bracelets and braids became loose.

COMMENTARY

The symptoms of the *gopīs*' mental anguish (*hṛt-tāpa*) are described in five verses (14-18). In this verse, Śukadeva Gosvāmī explains how the beautiful faces of the *gopīs* headed by Bhadrā paled due to sighing, which was caused by the torment in their hearts from hearing the news. The word *sraṁsad* (loosening) describes the sudden withering of the limbs of Śyāmala and other sakhīs which caused their clothes and ornaments to slip off.

|| 10.39.15 ||

anyāś ca tad-anudhyāna nivṛttāśeṣa-vṛttayaḥ

nābhyajānann imaṁ lokam ātma-lokaṁ gatā iva

TRANSLATION

Other gopīs entirely stopped their sensory activities and became fixed in meditation on Kṛṣṇa. They lost all awareness of the external world, just like those who attain the platform of self-realization.

COMMENTARY

This verse describes the *prema* of Candrāvalī and other *gopīs*. Absorbed in meditation upon Kṛṣṇa, the *gopīs*' senses stopped functioning. They lost all connection with their bodies and the world around them. The *gopīs* resembled persons who have realized the Supersoul in the sense that they lost all awareness of their material bodies. The Vraja-gopīs were not impersonalists, however, because they were actually relishing the sweetest taste of pure love of Godhead. The taste of *kṛṣṇa-prema* is completely different from the bliss of Brahman, like gold compared to glass.

|| 10.39.16 ||

smarantyaś cāparāḥ śaurer anurāga-smiteritāḥ

hṛdi-spṛśaś citra-padā giraḥ sammumuhuḥ striyaḥ

TRANSLATION

And still other young women fainted simply by remembering the words of Lord Śauri [Kṛṣṇa]. These words, decorated with wonderful phrases and expressed with affectionate smiles, would deeply touch the young girls' hearts.

COMMENTARY

This verse describes the extremely intense *prema* of Rādhā and other sakhīs. Here Śukadeva Gosvāmī indicates his inclination toward the *gopīs* with the word *śaureḥ* which implies, "Kṛṣṇa, who now thinks of Himself as a *kṣatriya* descendant of Śūrasena (*śaureḥ*), wants to go away to Mathurā." Rādhā and other *gopīs* became bewildered on remembering Kṛṣṇa's astonishing words and affectio-nate gentle smiles indicating His attraction for them. Remembering such statements as *na pāraye 'ham niravadya-saṁyujām* (SB 10.32.22), the *gopīs* became completely baffled. The previously mentioned *gopīs* were bewildered by their concentrated meditation on Kṛṣṇa's form. These *gopīs* however, became totally bewildered (*sammumuhuḥ*) simply by remembering Kṛṣṇa's words. This shows the superiority of their *prema*.

|| 10.39.17-18 ||

gatiṁ su-lalitāṁ ceṣṭāṁ snigdha-hāsāvalokanam

śokāpahāni narmāṇi proddāma-caritāni ca

cintayantyo mukundasya bhītā viraha-kātarāḥ

sametāḥ saṅghaśaḥ procur aśru-mukhyo 'cyutāśayāḥ

TRANSLATION

The gopīs were frightened at the prospect of even the briefest separation from Lord Mukunda, so now, as they remembered His graceful gait, His pastimes, His affectionate, smiling glances, His heroic deeds and His joking words, which would relieve their distress, they were beside themselves with anxiety at the thought of the great separation about to come. They gathered in groups and spoke to one another, their faces covered with tears and their minds fully absorbed in Acyuta.

COMMENTARY

In this way, the Vraja-gopīs, tossed by the waves of *prema*, spent the night in the grips of such *sañcārī-bhāvas* as fainting (*murccha*). Gaining external consciousness through the strength of the *sañcārī-bhāva* of anxiety over whether they would ever see Kṛṣṇa again, the *gopīs* eagerly gathered at dawn in great longing before Nanda's door. The *gopīs*, who feared even a moment's (*nimeṣa*) separation from Kṛṣṇa, were now devastated thinking about the approaching lengthy separation. Meeting in different groups, they began conversing. [The gopīs' talks (v. 19-31) expressing their love in separation are known as the "*Viraha-gītā*."]

|| 10.39.19 ||

śrī-gopya ūcuḥ

aho vidhātas tava na kvacid dayā saṁyojya maitryā praṇayena dehinaḥ

tāṁś cākṛtārthān viyunaṅkṣy apārthakaṁ vikrīḍitaṁ te 'rbhaka-ceṣṭitaṁ yathā

TRANSLATION

The gopīs said: O Providence, you have no mercy! You bring embodied creatures together in friendship and love and then senselessly separate them before they fulfill their desires. This whimsical play of yours is like a child's game.

COMMENTARY

As in the case of meeting Kṛṣṇa, the *gopīs* could not find any reason for Kṛṣṇa leaving them, so they began to criticize the Creator. "O Creator! Your act of injustice is astonishing."

"What is so unjust?"

"You don't have one drop of mercy. This is very unfair."

"How have you concluded this?"

"You bring people together in friendship and intense mutual exchange of mind, life and intellect, and then separate them again without fulfilling their desires for enjoyment.

Neither is there any purpose served by this act of separation of yours. Thus your whimsical act is just like the play of a child."

|| 10.39.20 ||

yas tvaṁ pradarśyāsita-kuntalāvṛtaṁ mukunda-vaktraṁ su-kapolam un-nasam

śokāpanoda-smita-leśa-sundaraṁ karoṣi pārokṣyam asādhu te kṛtam

TRANSLATION

Having shown us Mukunda's face, framed by dark locks and beautified by His fine cheeks, raised nose and gentle smiles, which eradicate all misery, you are now making that face invisible. This behavior of yours is not at all good.

COMMENTARY

"You should not compare me, the grandfather of everyone, to an inexperienced boy."

Fearing such a response from the Creator, the *gopīs* said, "You give sorrow to the souls of this world. Though you are the Creator, you show us the beautiful, smiling face of Mukunda which removes all suffering, and then make it disappear. That is very bad."

|| 10.39.21 ||

krūras tvam akrūra-samākhyayā sma naś cakṣur hi dattaṁ harase batājña-vat

yenaika-deśe 'khila-sarga-sauṣṭhavaṁ tvadīyam adrākṣma vayaṁ madhu-dviṣaḥ

TRANSLATION

O Providence, though you come here with the name Akrūra, you are indeed cruel, for like a fool you are taking away what you once gave us—those eyes with which we have seen, even in one feature of Lord Madhudviṣa's form, the perfection of your entire creation.

COMMENTARY

"But (Providence might object) Akrūra is taking Kṛṣṇa to Mathurā, not I."

The gopīs reply, “Though you are cruel (*krūra*), you have come with a name of the opposite meaning (*Akrūra*). No one except you could do such cruel work of taking away something you have given. You are taking away the same eyes which you gave us. This is just like a foolish person who, ignorant of piety and sin, takes away something he has previously given.”

Creator: “But I have come to take Kṛṣṇa, so why do you speak about your eyes?”

Gopīs: “In this case, by your taking away Kṛṣṇa, we are being blinded, and thus you are taking away our eyes. What else will we look at with these eyes which have seen the pinnacle of all beauty in the face and eyes of Madhusūdana? Therefore we will become blind!”

|| 10.39.22 ||

na nanda-sūnuḥ kṣaṇa-bhaṅga-sauhṛdaḥ samīkṣate naḥ sva-kṛtāturā bata

vihāya gehān sva-janān sutān patīṁs tad-dāsyam addhopagatā nava-priyaḥ

TRANSLATION

Alas, Nanda’s son, who breaks loving friendships in a second, will not even look directly at us. Forcibly brought under His control, we abandoned our homes, relatives, children and husbands just to serve Him, but He is always looking for new lovers.

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs* said, “Alas, alas! Kṛṣṇa, the sole object of our love and the cause of our life, is indifferent to us. Why are we blaming the Creator? How has He broken this very strong bond of love? Friendship broken in an instant cannot be real friendship. Though Kṛṣṇa has brought us to the point of death, He does not even look at us. He has decided to go to Mathurā for His own happiness, even though we will continuously cry and eventually die. To become Kṛṣṇa’s maidservants we gave up our homes, husbands and sons. But now He is giving us up and going away because He has new lovers and we have become useless. Thus in this life we achieve nothing for we have left our husbands and lost Kṛṣṇa, and in the next life we will suffer for having broken the laws of *dharma*.”

|| 10.39.23 ||

sukhaṁ prabhātā rajanīyam āśiṣaḥ satyā babhūvuḥ pura-yoṣitāṁ dhruvam

yāḥ saṁpraviṣṭasya mukhaṁ vrajas-pateḥ pāsyanty apāṅgotkalita-smitāsavam

TRANSLATION

The dawn following this night will certainly be auspicious for the women of Mathurā. All their hopes will now be fulfilled, for as the Lord of Vraja enters their city, they will be able to drink from His face the nectar of the smile emanating from the corners of His eyes.

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs* said, "Ah, this is so astonishing! While we have become unfortunate, the ladies of Mathurā have become supremely fortunate. This night will have an auspicious morning for the women of Mathurā, but an inauspicious one for the women of Vraja. The blessings given to them by the *brāhmaṇas*, or their long standing aspirations, have been fulfilled, whereas ours have become frustrated. The women of Mathurā will relish the intoxicating (*asava*) nectar of the smile emanating from the corners of Kṛṣṇa's eyes, which intimate a variety of confidential *rasas*. Instantly the women of Mathurā will abandon their propriety, shyness and fear to accept these hints. Then at a suitable time unseen by others, they will directly and fully drink the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's face."

|| 10.39.24 ||

tāsāṁ mukundo madhu-mañju-bhāṣitair gṛhīta-cittaḥ para-vān manasvy api

kathaṁ punar naḥ pratiyāsyate 'balā grāmyāḥ salajja-smita-vibhramair bhraman

TRANSLATION

O gopīs, although our Mukunda is intelligent and very obedient to His parents, once He has fallen under the spell of the honey—sweet words of the women of Mathurā and been enchanted by their alluring, shy smiles, how will He ever return to us unsophisticated village girls?

COMMENTARY

One *gopī* said, "Perhaps Kṛṣṇa will stay there a few days, and then being attracted by our love, He will come back with His parents." In reply to this they speak this verse.

A second *gopī* replied, "O foolish woman! You do not know the truth. Listen! Though Kṛṣṇa is obliged to His parents, being overwhelmed by the honey-sweet words of the

women of Mathurā and bewildered by their shy enchantments, how will He return to us? Why do you give useless hope to the minds of us village women (*grāmyāḥ*) who are devoid of beauty, arts and strength (*abalā*)?"

First gopī: "That may be, but you should have faith that Kṛṣṇa will return out of a sense of duty when He intelligently remembers His parents."

Second gopī: "But Kṛṣṇa will become so bewildered by their shy smiles and amorous suggestions that He will forget all of that."

|| 10.39.25 ||

adya dhruvaṁ tatra dṛśo bhaviṣyate

dāśārha-bhojāndhaka-vṛṣṇi-sātvatām

mahotsavaḥ śrī-ramaṇaṁ guṇāspadaṁ

drakṣyanti ye cādhvani devakī-sutam

TRANSLATION

When the Dāśārhas, Bhojas, Andhakas, Vṛṣṇis and Sātvatas see the son of Devakī in Mathurā, they will certainly enjoy a great festival for their eyes, as will all those who see Him traveling along the road to the city. After all, He is the darling of the goddess of fortune and the reservoir of all transcendental qualities.

COMMENTARY

A *gopī* said, "Today the people of Mathurā will attain the bliss that the inhabitants of Vraja had. There will be a festival for the eyes of the Dāśārhas, Bhojas and others, and all who see Kṛṣṇa traveling on the road."

|| 10.39.26 ||

maitad-vidhasyākaruṇasya nāma bhūd akrūra ity etad atīva dāruṇaḥ

yo 'sāv anāśvāsya su-duḥkhitam janaṁ priyāt priyaṁ neṣyati pāram adhvanaḥ

TRANSLATION

He who is doing this merciless deed should not be called Akrūra. He is so extremely cruel that without even trying to console the sorrowful residents of Vraja, he is taking away Kṛṣṇa, who is more dear to us than life itself.

COMMENTARY

In this verse the *gopīs* curse Akrūra: "It is not proper that such a person as this (*etat-vidhasya*) has the name Akrūra (not cruel), because he is extremely cruel. His name should be Krūra. He has not consoled even one of the Vrajavāsīs, who are suffering on the brink of death, by saying, 'Í will bring Kṛṣṇa back and present Him once again to you.' This Akrūra will accrue the sin of murdering the people of Vraja. He is taking Kṛṣṇa, who is more dear than our life, to a far away place where we cannot go."

|| 10.39.27 ||

anārdra-dhīr eṣa samāsthito rathaṁ tam anv amī ca tvarayanti durmadāḥ

gopā anobhiḥ sthavirair upekṣitaṁ daivaṁ ca no 'dya pratikūlam īhate

TRANSLATION

Hard-hearted Kṛṣṇa has already mounted the chariot, and now the foolish cowherds are hurrying after Him in their bullock carts. Even the elders are saying nothing to stop Him. Today fate is working against us.

COMMENTARY

"Just see how Akrūra has come to Vraja and spread his cruelty in all directions!"

The *gopīs* express this in this verse: "Though seeing us crying, the hard-hearted Kṛṣṇa simply sits on the chariot. Śrīdāma and other cowherd boys are following behind Kṛṣṇa in a cart. But they have become very foolish, because they are not aware that when Kṛṣṇa does not return to Vraja, they will also die in separation. Even the elders do not stop Him from going and thus neglect their own lives. Today fate has been unkind to us. If fate was acting in our favor, it would have produced some obstacle to His going. Thus we can deduce that the inhabitants of Vraja will no longer live."

|| 10.39.28 ||

nivārayāmaḥ samupetya mādhavaṁ kiṁ no 'kariṣyan kula-vṛddha-bāndhavāḥ

mukunda-saṅgān nimiṣārdha-dustyajād daivena vidhvaṁsita-dīna-cetasām

TRANSLATION

Let us directly approach Mādhava and stop Him from going. What can our family elders and other relatives do to us? Now that fate is separating us from Mukunda, our hearts are already wretched, for we cannot bear to give up His association even for a fraction of a second.

COMMENTARY

After discussing everything thoroughly with one another, the *gopīs* became emboldened and openly revealed the ecstasy swirling in their hearts. The *gopīs* said, "Let us go right up to Kṛṣṇa and pull at His clothes and hands and insist that He stay here with us. We will tell Him, 'Our dear one! O exclusive darling of our lives! Get down from the chariot, get down! Don't bring upon Yourself the sinful reaction for murdering so many women!'"

"But if we do that," said other *gopīs*, "Seeing the extreme boldness of us, who are girls of respectable families, the people will laugh at us, and the village elders will discover our secret love for Kṛṣṇa and abandon us. Seeing all this, our friends will also reject us."

"But what can they do to us?" replied one gopī.

"Yes, our lives are already wretched now that Kṛṣṇa is leaving. We have nothing to lose."

"That's right. We will remain in the Vṛndāvana forest just like presiding goddesses, and then we can fulfill our true desire—to stay with Kṛṣṇa in the forest."

"Yes, and even if the elders and our relatives punish us by beating us or locking us up, we can still live happily with the knowledge that Kṛṣṇa is residing in our village. Some of our girlfriends who are not imprisoned will cleverly find a way to bring us Kṛṣṇa's *prasadi pān* and garlands, and then we can remain alive. But if Kṛṣṇa is not stopped, we will certainly die."

|| 10.39.29 ||

yasyānurāga-lalita-smita-valgu-mantra

līlāvaloka-parirambhaṇa-rāsa-goṣṭhām

nītāḥ sma naḥ kṣaṇam iva kṣaṇadā vinā taṁ

gopyaḥ kathaṁ nv atitarema tamo durantam

TRANSLATION

When He brought us to the assembly of the rāsa dance, where we enjoyed His affectionate and charming smiles, His delightful secret talks, His playful glances and His embraces, we passed many nights as if they were a single moment. O gopīs, how can we possibly cross over the insurmountable darkness of His absence?

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs* said, "There are other reasons for stopping Him also. During the *rāsa* dance we enjoyed His affectionate playful smiles, attractive intimate talks (*valgu-mantra*) and secret meetings. Without Kṛṣṇa, how can we cross the dark ocean of separation whose far shore cannot be seen? In the bliss of Kṛṣṇa's company a thousand nights passed in a moment. But in the misery of His separation each moment will feel like a thousand ages. How will we find the strength to pass the many nights that now await us in the future?"

|| 10.39.30 ||

yo 'hnaḥ kṣaye vrajam ananta-sakhaḥ parīto

gopair viśan khura-rajaś-churitālaka-srak

veṇuṁ kvaṇan smita-katākṣa-nirīkṣaṇena

cittaṁ kṣiṇoty amum ṛte nu kathaṁ bhavema

TRANSLATION

How can we exist without Ananta's friend Kṛṣṇa, who in the evening would return to Vraja in the company of the cowherd boys, His hair and garland powdered with the dust raised by the cows' hooves? As He played His flute, He would captivate our minds with His smiling sidelong glances.

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs* said, “Moreover, we will die this very evening. At the end of the day, Kṛṣṇa, that friend of Balarāma, would vibrate His flute while entering Vraja, gaze upon our breasts, and captivate our hearts with His sidelong glances. How will we live without Kṛṣṇa? If we do not receive that glance this evening, how will we maintain our lives?”

|| 10.39.31 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

evaṁ bruvāṇā virahāturā bhṛśaṁ vraja-striyaḥ kṛṣṇa-viṣakta-mānasāḥ

visṛjya lajjāṁ ruruduḥ sma su-svaraṁ govinda dāmodara mādhaveti

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: After speaking these words, the ladies of Vraja, who were so attached to Kṛṣṇa, felt extremely agitated by their imminent separation from Him. They forgot all shame and loudly cried out, “O Govinda! O Dāmodara! O Mādhava!”

COMMENTARY

After lamenting and discussing in this way, the *gopīs* gathered together to make Kṛṣṇa get down from the chariot. However, due to the pain of separation they could neither move a step nor utter clear words.

“O Govinda! Please take (*vinda:labhasva*) all of our thousands of senses (*go*) such as our minds and eyes. They are going away in Your association, so please be merciful and take them. Let our senses remain yoked to the bull of Your mind and thus protect them and do not neglect them. If our bodies are not suitable for meeting with You, and You do not return to us, then right here we will give up our bodies.”

“If You desire You may incur the sin of murdering women, but don’t kill that mother of Yours, the divine Queen of Vraja, by whose love You even allowed Yourself to be bound with ropes (*dāmodara*). Yaśodā will die for sure if You do not return within two days. Please do not take on the sin of matricide.” The *gopīs* express this train of thought by exclaiming, “O Dāmodara.”

The gopīs said, “O Mādhava (husband of Lakṣmī-devī)! You are not our husband (*dhava*), but You are our boyfriend. As our husband, You would not be at fault if You protected or

destroyed us, because we would be Your property. But we are others' property. Therefore, You should not allow Yourself to commit the sin of destroying another's possessions."

|| 10.39.32 ||

strīṇām evaṁ rudantīnām udite savitary atha

akrūraś codayām āsa kṛta-maitrādiko ratham

TRANSLATION

But even as the gopīs cried out in this way, Akrūra, having at sunrise performed His morning worship and other duties, began to drive the chariot.

COMMENTARY

The word *strīṇām* (women) is in the genitive case to express disrespect. Akrūra disrespected the *gopīs* by not comforting them and saying, "O Mother Yaśodā, please forgive my offense because I am simply the servant of the king. I promise that with my own hand I will bring Kṛṣṇa back to you." Some expert *rasika* Vaiṣṇavas say that because of this disrespect or offense, Akrūra was later separated from Kṛṣṇa during the Syamantaka jewel episode, driven unhappily from Dvārakā, and forced to take up an ignoble residence in Vārāṇasī.

Completing his morning duties such as bathing, *puja* and *sandhya* rites, Akrūra mounted the chariot. Some authorities say that because Śukadeva Gosvāmī was so absorbed in the *gopīs*' lamentation at this time, he could not describe the lamentation of Yaśodā. Other authorities say that Yaśodā was repeatedly assured by Nanda, the cowherd men, and her peers among the *Vraja gopīs* that there was no need to worry because her son, who was very eager to see the festivities of the Dhanur-yajña, was going in the company of His father.

They said, "When the time comes, Nanda Bābā will feed Him, and then Kṛṣṇa will sleep comfortably in His father's lap. After a day in Mathurā, Kṛṣṇa will return to Vraja with His father. Why should we be in anxiety?"

|| 10.39.33 ||

gopās tam anvasajjanta nandādyāḥ śakaṭais tataḥ

ādāyopāyanaṁ bhūri kumbhān go-rasa-sambhṛtān

TRANSLATION

Led by Nanda Mahārāja, the cowherd men followed behind Lord Kṛṣṇa in their wagons. The men brought along many offerings for the King, including clay pots filled with ghee and other milk products.

|| 10.39.34 ||

gopyaś ca dayitaṁ kṛṣṇam anuvrajyānurañjitāḥ

pratyādeśaṁ bhagavataḥ kāṅkṣantyaś cāvatasthire

TRANSLATION

[With His glances] Lord Kṛṣṇa somewhat pacified the gopīs, and they also followed behind for some time. Then, hoping He would give them some instruction, they stood still.

COMMENTARY

Anurañjitāḥ means that Kṛṣṇa made the *gopīs* somewhat happy by His glances as He turned to face them while sitting on the chariot. Seeing the life airs of His darlings about to leave their bodies, Kṛṣṇa spoke to them with His affectionate glances, “O my beloved girls! Do not be sad. After satisfying these people I will return to you.”

The *gopīs* became happy, and as their legs became a little mobile they began to follow the chariot along with the cowherd boys who were blissfully walking behind it. Hoping to receive some instruction from Kṛṣṇa, the *gopīs* suddenly stood still. As Kṛṣṇa had consoled them with His compassionate glances, the *gopīs* desired that He do so with His words as well.

|| 10.39.35 ||

tās tathā tapyatīr vīkṣya sva-prasthāṇe yadūttamaḥ

sāntvayām asa sa-premair āyāsya iti dautyakaiḥ

TRANSLATION

As He departed, that best of the Yadus saw how the gopīs, were lamenting, and thus He consoled them by sending a messenger with this loving promise: "I will return."

COMMENTARY

Seeing the gopīs burning in torment (*tapyatīr:santa-pyamānāḥ*), that best of the Yadus, who was now inclined to protect the Yadus, consoled the *gopīs* by sending through messengers thousands of assurances to increase their faith, so that they would regain full consciousness. *Ka* is added to *dautyakaiḥ* to indicate that the messages were full of compassion.

Kṛṣṇa said, "I will return quickly. Just as your hearts are breaking at the thought of our separation, similarly My heart is also breaking. I am dependent on you. When with the tongue of My mind I lick the sweet liquor of Your smiling sidelong glances, which are rarely found in all the three worlds, My life becomes fulfilled. If I do not return the day after tomorrow, then both you and I will lose our lives. But if I live because of a long life span or because of expectations of reunion, this life will be more painful than a million deaths." Thus Kṛṣṇa solaced the *gopīs* with such words imbued with the nectar of pure love (*sa-premair*).

|| 10.39.36 ||

yāvad ālakṣyate ketur yāvad reṇū rathasya ca

anuprasthāpitātmāno lekhyānīvopalakṣitāḥ

TRANSLATION

Sending their minds after Kṛṣṇa, the gopīs stood as motionless as figures in a painting. They remained there as long as the flag atop the chariot was visible, and even until they could no longer see the dust raised by the chariot wheels.

COMMENTARY

As long as the flag on the chariot was still visible, the *gopīs* sent their minds after their departing beloved, while they remained standing. To the people around them the stunned *gopīs* appeared like painted pictures.

|| 10.39.37 ||

tā nirāśā nivavṛtur govinda-vinivartane

viśokā ahanī ninyur gāyantyaḥ priya-ceṣṭitam

TRANSLATION

The gopīs then turned back, without hope that Govinda would ever return to them. Full of sorrow, they began to spend their days and nights chanting about the pastimes of their beloved.

COMMENTARY

Giving up the hope that Govinda would turn around and come back to Vraja, the *gopīs* left that spot. They gave up the idea that Kṛṣṇa was just fooling them and would actually come back. They passed their days in extreme sorrow.

|| 10.39.38 ||

bhagavān api samprāpto rāmākrūra-yuto nṛpa

rathena vāyu-vegena kālindīm agha-nāśinīm

TRANSLATION

My dear King, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, traveling as swiftly as the wind in that chariot with Lord Balarāma and Akrūra, arrived at the river Kālindī, which destroys all sins.

|| 10.39.39 ||

tatropaspṛśya pānīyaṁ pītvā mṛṣṭaṁ maṇi-prabham

vṛkṣa-ṣaṇḍam upavrajya sa-rāmo ratham āviśat

TRANSLATION

The river's sweet water was more effulgent than brilliant jewels. After Lord Kṛṣṇa had touched it for purification, He drank some from His hand. Then He had the chariot moved near a grove of trees and climbed back on, along with Balarāma.

|| 10.39.40 ||

akrūras tāv upāmantrya niveśya ca rathopari

kālindyā hradam āgatya snānaṁ vidhi-vad ācarat

TRANSLATION

Akrūra asked the two Lords to take Their seats on the chariot. Then, taking Their permission, he went to a pool in the Yamunā and took his bath as enjoined in the scriptures.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra kept Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma on the chariot for Their comfort or out of fear of enemies, and then went to the Yamunā.

|| 10.39.41 ||

nimajjya tasmin salile japan brahmā sanātanam

tāv eva dadṛśe 'krūro rāma-kṛṣṇau samanvitau

TRANSLATION

While immersing himself in the water and reciting eternal mantras from the Vedas, Akrūra suddenly saw Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa before him.

COMMENTARY

In Vraja, Akrūra saw a form more astonishing than the one that he meditated on with his personal *mantra*, so he became fixed in that form. Now however, since he was no longer hearing the sweet words of the gopīs, and had again become fixed in chanting his Vedic *dīkṣā mantra*, Kṛṣṇa showed him Vaikuṇṭha.

|| 10.39.42-43 ||

tau ratha-sthau katham iha sutāv ānakadundubheḥ

tarhi svit syandane na sta ity unmajjya vyacaṣṭa saḥ

tatrāpi ca yathā-pūrvam āsīnau punar eva saḥ

nyamajjad darśanaṁ yan me mṛṣā kiṁ salile tayoḥ

TRANSLATION

Akrūra thought, "How can the two sons of Ānakadundubhi, who are sitting in the chariot, be standing here in the water? They must have left the chariot." But when he came out of the river, there They were on the chariot, just as before. Asking himself "Was the vision I had of Them in the water an illusion?" Akrūra reentered the pool.

|| 10.39.44-45 ||

bhūyas tatrāpi so 'drākṣīt stūyamānam ahīśvaram

siddha-cāraṇa-gandharvair asurair nata-kandharaiḥ

sahasra-śirasaṁ devaṁ sahasra-phaṇa-maulinam

nīlāmbaraṁ visa-śvetaṁ śṛṅgaiḥ śvetam iva sthitam

TRANSLATION

There Akrūra now saw Ananta Śeṣa, the Lord of the serpents, receiving praise from Siddhas, Cāraṇas, Gandharvas and demons, who all had their heads bowed. The Personality of Godhead whom Akrūra saw had thousands of heads, thousands of hoods and thousands of helmets. His blue garment and His fair complexion, as white as the filaments of a lotus stem, made Him appear like white Kailāsa Mountain with its many peaks.

COMMENTARY

When Akrūra submerged himself a second time in the Yamunā, he saw Kṛṣṇa's plenary portion of Śrī Viṣṇu, the worshipable Deity of Akrūra's own *mantra*.

In order to fix his mind upon Viṣṇu, Akrūra directly meditated upon the Lord's entourage and His form, from His toenails to the top of His head. At that time Akrūra declared, "My worshipable Deity, the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha, has descended in the home of Vāsudeva in Mathurā."

Akrūra's Vaikuṇṭha *darśana* of the Lord is described in thirteen verses (44-56). Verses 44-45 describe Ananta Śeṣa, the expansion of Balarāma, who is as white and towering as Mount Kailāsa with its peaks of snow, and has thousands of hoods and crowns. When Akrūra went into the Yamunā the second time, he saw Śeṣa in Vaikuṇṭha. This is in accordance with Śrīdhara Swami's comments on *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.28.16) and *Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta* Text 20:

vaikuṇṭhe 'pi yathā śeso, nāradah sanakādayaḥ

akrūra-dṛṣṭāne came, daśame parikīrtitaḥ

"Exalted individual souls (*jīvas*) into whom Lord Jānardana enters with a portion of His knowledge-potency (*samvit-śakti*) and other potencies are called *āveśas*. Śeṣa, Nārada and the four Kumāras are examples of them in Vaikuṇṭha. They were seen by Akrūra."

|| 10.39.46-48 ||

tasyotsaṅge ghana-syāmaṁ pīta-kauśeya-vāsasam

puruṣaṁ catur-bhujaṁ śāntam padma-patrāruṇekṣaṇam

cāru-prasanna-vadanaṁ cāru-hāsa-nirīkṣaṇam

su-bhrūnnasaṁ caru-karṇaṁ su-kapolāruṇādharam

pralamba-pīvara-bhujaṁ tuṅgāṁsoraḥ-sthala-śriyam

kambu-kaṇṭhaṁ nimna-nābhiṁ valimat-pallavodaram

TRANSLATION

Akrūra then saw the Supreme Personality of Godhead lying peacefully on the lap of Lord Ananta Śeṣa. The complexion of that Supreme Person was like a dark-blue cloud. He wore yellow garments and had four arms and reddish lotus-petal eyes. His face looked attractive and cheerful with its smiling, endearing glance and lovely eyebrows, its raised nose and finely formed ears, and its beautiful cheeks and reddish lips. The Lord's broad shoulders and expansive chest were

beautiful, and His arms long and stout. His neck resembled a conchshell, His navel was deep, and His abdomen bore lines like those on a banyan leaf

|| 10.39.49-50 ||

bṛhat-kati-tata-śroṇi karabhoru-dvayānvitam

cāru-jānu-yugaṁ cāru jaṅghā-yugala-saṁyutam

tuṅga-gulphāruṇa-nakha vrāta-dīdhitibhir vṛtam

navāṅguly-aṅguṣṭha-dalair vilasat-pāda-paṅkajam

TRANSLATION

He had large loins and hips, thighs like an elephant's trunk, and shapely knees and shanks. His raised ankles reflected the brilliant effulgence emanating from the nails on His petallike toes, which beautified His lotus feet.

COMMENTARY

Texts 46-50: Śukadeva Gosvāmī describes Kṛṣṇa's partial expansion known as Nārāyaṇa in these verses. From the beginning of the forty-sixth verse until the verb *vilokya* (behold) in the fifty-sixth verse, there is one sentence. Nārāyaṇa had high shoulders and a glossy chest, crease lines on His *banyan* leaf-shaped belly. He had large a buttocks, forearms, thighs like the trunk of an elephant (*karabha*), and slightly raised ankles. His lotus feet had tender petal-like toes.

|| 10.39.51-52 ||

su-mahārha-maṇi-vrāta kirīṭa-kaṭakāṅgadaiḥ

kaṭi-sūtra-brahma-sūtra hāra-nūpura-kuṇḍalaiḥ

bhrājamānaṁ padma-karaṁ śaṅkha-cakra-gadā-dharam

śrīvatsa-vakṣasaṁ bhrājat kaustubhaṁ vana-mālinam

TRANSLATION

Adorned with a helmet, bracelets and armlets, which were all bedecked with many priceless jewels, and also with a belt, a sacred thread, necklaces, ankle bells and earrings, the Lord shone with dazzling effulgence. In one hand He held a lotus flower, in the others a conchshell, discus and club. Gracing His chest were the Śrīvatsa mark, the brilliant Kaustubha gem and a flower garland.

|| 10.39.53-55 ||

sunanda-nanda-pramukhaiḥ parṣadaiḥ sanakādibhiḥ

sureśair brahma-rudrādyair navabhiś ca dvijottamaiḥ

prahrāda-nārada-vasu pramukhair bhāgavatottamaiḥ

stūyamānaṁ pṛthag-bhāvair vacobhir amalātmabhiḥ

śriyā puṣṭyā girā kāntyā kīrtyā tuṣṭyelayorjayā

vidyayāvidyayā śaktyā māyayā ca niṣevitam

TRANSLATION

Encircling the Lord and worshiping Him were Nanda, Sunanda and His other personal attendants; Sanaka and the other Kumāras; Brahmā, Rudra and other chief demigods; the nine chief brāhmaṇas; and the best of the saintly devotees, headed by Prahlāda, Nārada and Uparicara Vasu. Each of these great personalities was worshiping the Lord by chanting sanctified words of praise in his own unique mood. Also in attendance were the Lord's principal internal potencies—Śrī, Puṣṭi, Gīr, Kānti, Kīrti, Tuṣṭi, Ilā and Ūrjā—as were His material potencies Vidyā, Avidyā and Māyā, and His internal pleasure potency, Śakti.

COMMENTARY

(Text 53) Each of these exalted personalities was worshiping Nārāyaṇa by chanting sanctified words of praise in his own unique mood. The personal attendants of Nārāyaṇa addressed Him as their master. The Four Kumāras worshiped Him as Brahman. Brahmā and other demigods worshiped Nārāyaṇa as the Supreme Controller. Marīci and others worshiped Him as the Lord of the progenitors. Prahlāda and others praised Him as their worshipable Deity.

The associates of Lord Nārāyaṇa stood around Him in the eight directions. The Four Kumāras stood behind Nārāyaṇa; Brahmā and the demigods to the right; Marīci and the other *brahmin* sons of Brahmā to the left; Prahlāda and other great devotees in front; and Nārada and Uparicara Vasu were almost in front. All the persons mentioned here are eternally liberated (*nitya-parṣadaiḥ*) associates of Lord Nārāyaṇa. It should be understood that Brahmā and the other demigods seen in this material world are expansions of these transcendental demigods residing in Vaikuṇṭha. This is stated in the *Uttara-khaṇda* of the *Padma Purāṇa*:

nityāḥ sarve pare dhāmi, ye cānye ca divaukasaḥ,

te vai prākṛta-nāke 'sminn, anityās tridevīsvarāḥ

"All the demigods who are in the spiritual domain are eternal, whereas the demigods in this material sky are not."

(Texts 53-55) Nārāyaṇa was surrounded by His principal internal potencies, who were emanations from His *svarūpa*, personal form. "Śrī is the potency of wealth; Puṣṭi that of strength; Gīr, knowledge; Kānti, beauty; Kīrti, fame; and Tuṣṭi, renunciation. These are the Lord's six opulences. Ilā is His *bhū-śakti*, also known as *sandhinī*, the internal potency of whom the element earth is an expansion. Ūrjā is His internal potency for performing pastimes; she expands as the tulasī plant in this world. Vidyā and Avidyā [knowledge and ignorance] are external potencies who cause the living entities' liberation and bondage, respectively. Śakti is His internal pleasure potency, *hlādinī*, and Māyā is an internal potency who is the basis of Vidyā and Avidyā. The word *ca* in this verse indicates the *jīva* or *tatastha-śakti*, who is subordinate to Māyā. The prefix *ni* in *niṣevitam* means *nitya-kāla*, or that the Lord is eternally served by all these personified potencies.

|| 10.39.56-57 ||

vilokya su-bhṛśaṁ prīto bhaktyā paramayā yutaḥ

hṛṣyat-tanūruho bhāva-pariklinnātma-locanaḥ

girā gadgadayāstauṣīt sattvam ālambya sātvataḥ

praṇamya mūrdhnāvahitaḥ kṛtāñjali-puṭaḥ śanaiḥ

TRANSLATION

As the great devotee Akrūra beheld all this, he became extremely pleased and felt enthused with transcendental devotion. His intense ecstasy caused His bodily hairs to stand on end and tears to flow from his eyes, drenching his entire body. Somehow managing to steady himself, Akrūra bowed his head to the ground. Then he joined his palms in supplication and, in a voice choked with emotion, very slowly and attentively began to pray.

Thus ends the commentary on the Thirty ninth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Forty

Akrūra's Prayers

|| 10.40.1 ||

śrī-akrūra uvāca

nato 'smy ahaṁ tvākhila-hetu-hetuṁ nārāyaṇaṁ pūruṣam ādyam avyayam

yan-nābhi-jātād aravinda-koṣād brahmāvirāsīd yata eṣa lokaḥ

TRANSLATION

Śrī Akrūra said: I bow down to You, the cause of all causes, the original and inexhaustible Supreme Person, Nārāyaṇa. From the whorl of the lotus born from Your navel, Brahmā appeared, and by his agency this universe has come into being.

COMMENTARY

In this chapter, Akrūra pays respects to Kṛṣṇa, and praises the forms in which He is worshiped and the worshiping process.

Akrūra prayed, "The cause of everything is Brahmā whose cause is Nārāyaṇa, the cause of all causes who has the form of an eternal person. Nārāyaṇa, who is without beginning or end (*ādyam avyayam*), is the origin of Brahmā."

|| 10.40.2 ||

bhūs toyam agniḥ pavanaṁ kham ādir mahān ajādir mana indriyāṇi

sarvendriyārthā vibudhāś ca sarve ye hetavas te jagato 'ṅga-bhūtāḥ

TRANSLATION

Earth; water; fire; air; ether and its source, false ego; the mahat-tattva, the total material nature and her source, the Supreme Lord's puruṣa expansion; the mind; the senses; the sense objects; and the senses' presiding deities—all these causes of the cosmic manifesta-tion are born from Your transcendental body.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra prayed, "Furthermore, everything that exists is an expansion from the purely conscious and ecstatic original person (*cid-ānanda puruṣa*). The earth, water, fire, air, ether and its origin, false ego, *mahat-tattva, māyā, pradhāna*, the living entities (*jīva*), time, action (*karma*), the senses and sense objects all arise from Your transcendental body (*puruṣa*) as stated in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (2.6.1): *vācāṁ vahner mukhaṁ kṣetraṁ*, 'Lord Brahmā said: The mouth of the *virāt-puruṣa* (the universal form of the Lord) is the generating center of the voice, and the controlling deity is fire.' "

|| 10.40.3 ||

naite svarūpaṁ vidur ātmanas te hy ajādayo 'nātmatayā gṛhītaḥ

ajo 'nubaddhaḥ sa guṇair ajāyā guṇāt paraṁ veda na te svarūpam

TRANSLATION

The total material nature and these other elements of creation certainly cannot know You as You are, for they are manifested in the realm of dull matter. Since You are beyond the modes of nature, even Lord Brahmā, who is bound up in these modes, does not know Your true identity.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra prayed, "The material ingredients of creation are generated from You, but they do not know You as the Supersoul because they are covered by matter."

Kṛṣṇa replied, “Even if we accept that material things cannot know Me, the conscious living entities will be able to know Me.”

Akrūra said, “The living entity cannot know You, even if he becomes Brahmā (*ajaḥ*). Why? Due to being covered by the modes of the unborn material nature, he cannot know Your real form which is beyond the three modes of material nature.”

|| 10.40.4 ||

tvāṁ yogino yajanty addhā mahā-puruṣam īśvaram

sādhyātmaṁ sādhibhūtaṁ ca sādhidaivaṁ ca sādhavaḥ

TRANSLATION

Pure yogīs worship You, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, by conceiving of You in the threefold form comprising the living entities, the material elements that constitute the living entities’ bodies, and the controlling deities of those elements.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra prayed, “Furthermore, although no one knows You, still, since You are the bestower of all fruitive results, those who are acquiring these various fruits, even while engaged in worshiping different objects, are in truth all worshiping You.”

Akrūra first mentions the paths of Sāṅkhya and yoga. Brahmā and others (*yoginaḥ*) worship the Lord (*īśvaram*) as the Paramātmā (*mahā-puruṣam*), the witness of the *ādhyātma, ādhibhūtaṁ* and *ādhidaivaṁ*.

|| 10.40.5 ||

trayyā ca vidyayā kecit tvāṁ vai vaitānikā dvijāḥ

yajante vitatair yajñair nānā-rūpāmarākhyayā

TRANSLATION

Brāhmaṇas who follow the regulations concerning the three sacred fires worship You by chanting mantras from the three Vedas and performing elaborate fire sacrifices for the various demigods, who have many forms and names.

COMMENTARY

Thus Sāṅkhya and yoga have been mentioned, considering them together as one. This verse describes those following the path of fruitive work (*karma*),

Akrūra prayed, "The *vaitānikās* (*karma-yogīs*) are indeed worshiping You."

Kṛṣṇa said, "But they perform sacrifices to Indra, Varuṇa, Vāyu and other demigods, not to Me."

Akrūra said, "They are actually offering sacrifices to You by the names (*ākhyayā*) of the various demigods, appearing as Vajrahasta (Indra) and others. The idea behind this is as follows: In the prayers which glorify Indra, Varuṇa and other demigods, these demigods are shown to have supreme power. But there cannot be many supreme controllers, therefore it is You alone who are being worshiped by various names. This is confirmed in the Śruti:

> *sa prathamah sa prakrtir viśvakarmā, sa prathamo mitrā-varuṇo agniḥ, sa prathamo brhaspati cikitvāṁs, tasmā indrāya havir ājuhoti*
>
> "He is first. He is the material nature. He is Visvakarma. He is the first Mitra, Varuṇa and Agni. He is the first Brhaspati. In this way offerings were made to Indra (the Supreme Lord)."

|| 10.40.6 ||

eke tvākhila-karmāṇi sannyasyopaśamaṁ gatāḥ

jñānino jñāna-yajñena yajanti jñāna-vigraham

TRANSLATION

In pursuit of spiritual knowledge, some persons renounce all material activities and, having thus become peaceful, perform the sacrifice of philosophic investigation to worship You, the original form of all knowledge.

COMMENTARY

This verse describes those following the path of knowledge (*jñāna*). Akrūra prayed, "Through *samādhi* (*jñāna-yajñena*) they worship (*yajanti*) You as the original form of knowledge (*jñāna-svarūpa: jñāna-vigraham*)."

Jñāna-vigraham can also mean the special (*vigraham:viśeṣato*) taste or experience (*grahaṇam:asvādanam*) of Brahman realization.

|| 10.40.7 ||

anye ca saṁskṛtātmāno vidhināabhihitena te

yajanti tvan-mayās tvāṁ vai bahu-mūrty-eka-mūrtikam

TRANSLATION

And yet others—those whose intelligence is pure—follow the injunctions of Vaiṣṇava scriptures promulgated by You. Absorbing their minds in thought of You, they worship You as the one Supreme Lord manifesting in multiple forms.

COMMENTARY

This verse depicts the path of the Vaiṣṇavas. The word *saṁskṛtāt-mānaḥ*, "they whose intelligence is pure," implies that the worshipers mentioned before have not completely purified their intelligence of material contamination and thus they worship the Lord indirectly. *Vidhinā* means by the opinion of the *Pañcarātra*, which is promulgated by Kṛṣṇa. This is confirmed in the *Smṛti: pāncarātrasya sarvasya vaktā tu bhagavān svayam*, "The *Pāncarātras* were all uttered by the Lord Himself." Thus, since the *Pañcarātra* is the best evidence, it should be respected by everyone.

Akrūra prayed, "By revealing Yourself to them both internally and externally, they worship You as both having many forms and having only one form."

The *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* (1.21) describes this inconceivable potency of Kṛṣṇa as follows: *eko vasī sarva-gaḥ kṛṣṇa īḍyaḥ*: "That one Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of

Godhead and He is worshipable." And *eko 'pi san bahudhā yo 'vabhāti*, "Although the Lord is one, He is present in innumerable hearts as many."

|| 10.40.8 ||

tvām evānye śivoktena mārgeṇa śiva-rūpiṇam

bahv-ācārya-vibhedena bhagavantarn upāsate

TRANSLATION

There are still others, who worship You, the Supreme Lord, in the form of Lord Śiva. They follow the path described by him and interpreted in various ways by many teachers.

COMMENTARY

This verse describes the Śaivites, worshipers of Lord Śiva. The words *tvām eva*, "You also," indicates a relative inferiority, just as in the saying, "The prince is also a king." In other words, the path of worshiping Lord Śiva is indirect and therefore inferior. *Bahv-ācārya-vibhedena* means that they worship the Supreme Lord according to the path of the various kinds of Śaivites, such as the Pāśupatas. *Bhagavantam-upāsate* (worship the Lord) or *Bhagavan sam-upāsate* are two versions of the last phrase of the verse.

|| 10.40.9 ||

sarva eva yajanti tvāṁ sarva-deva-mayeśvaram

ye 'py anya-devatā-bhaktā yady apy anya-dhiyaḥ prabho

TRANSLATION

But all these people, my Lord, even those who have turned their attention away from You and are worshiping other deities, are actually worshiping You alone, O embodiment of all the demigods.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra prayed, "All of these worshipers (*yogīs, karmīs* and Śaivites), whose characteristics have been thus described, actually are worshiping You."

Kṛṣṇa replied, “How is this?”

Akrūra: “This is because You comprise all the demigods, and also because You are the Supreme Controller.

Kṛṣṇa: “But when asked they will say that they are worshipping Śiva, Sūrya, Ganesh and so on.”

Akrūra: “Those who worship the demigods indirectly worship You as the Supersoul in all the demigods, even though that is not the correct way of worshiping You.”

Kṛṣṇa: “But if that is so, then how am I being worshipped? They never for even a moment turn their remembrance toward Me.

Akrūra: “Though they meditate on the demigods, not You, they are still worshiping You.”

|| 10.40.10 ||

yathādri-prabhavā nadyaḥ parjanyāpūritāḥ prabho

viśanti sarvataḥ sindhuṁ tadvat tvāṁ gatayo ’ntataḥ

TRANSLATION

As rivers born from the mountains and filled by the rain flow from all sides into the sea, so do all these paths in the end reach You, O master.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa objects, “But if they are worshiping Me, then they should achieve Me.”

Akrūra: “No, it is not like this. The worship goes to You, but those worshipers do not attain You. You have stated this Yourself in the Bhagavad-gītā (9.23-25):

ye ’py anya-devatā-bhaktā yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ

te ’pi mām eva kaunteya yayanty avidhi-pūrvakam

ahaṁ hi sarva-yajñānāṁ bhoktā ca prabhur eva ca

na tu mām abhijānanti tattvenātaś cyavanti te

yānti deva-vratā devān pitṝn yānti pitṛ-vratāḥ

bhūtāni yānti bhūtejyā yānti mad-yājino ’pi mām

“Those who are devotees of other gods and who worship them with faith actually worship only Me, O son of Kunti, but they do so in a wrong way. I am the only enjoyer and master of all sacrifices. Therefore, those who do not recognize My true transcendental nature fall down. Those who worship the demigods will take birth among the demigods; those who worship the ancestors go to the ancestors; those who worship ghosts and spirits will take birth among such beings; and those who worship Me will live with Me.”

Akrūra: “I am also saying the same thing with an example. The raging rivers, which are born from the mountains, are formed from the water raining upon the mountains from the clouds (*parjanyena: meghena*). The rivers then flow down in all directions and ultimately enter the sea. Just as the rivers flow into the ocean, but not the mountains which generate the rivers, so the worship on different paths goes to You, but not the worshippers. This means that because You are the Supersoul within them and the shelter of the demigods, the worship of them goes to You. Worship of them is worship of You.”

“As the clouds come from the ocean, so the *Vedas* come from You. The various types of worship, coming from the *Vedas*, are the water, and the worshipper is the mountain. Just as many rivers flow from many places to enter the ocean, so the various types of worship of different worshippers flow from the demigods to Viṣṇu.”

|| 10.40.11 ||

sattvaṁ rajas tama iti bhavataḥ prakṛter guṇāḥ

teṣu hi prākṛtāḥ protā ā-brahma-sthāvarādayaḥ

TRANSLATION

Goodness, passion and ignorance, the qualities of Your material nature, entangle all conditioned living beings, from Brahmā down to the nonmoving creatures.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa replies, “If that is so, then why doesn’t everyone worship Me?” Akrūra answers in this verse.

Akrūra prayed, “All living entities are bound by the three modes of nature. If even Brahmā is bewildered by *māyā*, then what to speak of all the humans? Therefore, how can they worship You?”

|| 10.40.12 ||

tubhyaṁ namas te tv aviṣakta-dṛṣṭaye sarvātmane sarva-dhiyāṁ ca sākṣiṇe

guṇa-pravāho ’yam avidyayā kṛtaḥ pravartate deva-nṛ-tiryag-ātmasu

TRANSLATION

I offer My obeisances to You, who as the Supreme Soul of all beings witness everyone’s consciousness with unbiased vision. The current of Your material modes, produced by the force of ignorance, flows strongly among the living beings who assume identities as demigods, humans and animals.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra prayed, “I offer my obeisances to You for the purpose of achieving You (*te: tvām prāptum*). You show Your mercy only to Your devotees, and do not turn Your attention to the worshippers of other deities.”

Kṛṣṇa: “How then can you say that I accept worship of the demigods, since one who receives worship from persons becomes inclined toward them?”

Akrūra: “Since You are the underlying basis of everything (*sarvāt-mane*), You receive all the worship offered by various persons. But You do not become obliged to them because they do not worship You directly. Although You dwell in everyone’s heart and witness everything they do, You remain aloof in all circumstances.”

Kṛṣṇa: “Well, can the demigods deliver their worshippers?”

Akrūra: “Ignorance and the force of the modes of nature (*guna-pravāho*) influence the demigods, humans, animals and birds to assume false bodily identities. Since the demigods are also subject to the three modes of material nature, how can they deliver their own worshippers?”

|| 10.40.13-14 ||

agnir mukhaṁ te ’vanir aṅghrir īkṣaṇaṁ

sūryo nabho nābhir atho diśaḥ śrutiḥ

dyauḥ kaṁ surendrās tava bāhavo ’rṇavāḥ
kukṣir marut prāṇa-balaṁ prakalpitam

romāṇi vṛkṣauṣadhayaḥ śiroruhā

meghāḥ parasyāsthi-nakhāni te ’drayaḥ

nimeṣaṇaṁ rātry-ahanī prajāpatir

meḍhras tu vṛṣṭis tava vīryam iṣyate

TRANSLATION

Fire is said to be Your face, the earth Your feet, the sun Your eye, and the sky Your navel. The directions are Your sense of hearing, the chief demigods Your arms, and the oceans Your abdomen. Heaven is thought to be Your head, and the wind Your vital air and physical strength. The trees and plants are the hairs on Your body, the clouds the hair on Your head, and the mountains the bones and nails of You, the Supreme. The passage of day and night is the blinking of Your eyes, the progenitor of mankind Your genitals, and the rain Your semen.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra prayed, “Furthermore, all these demigods are Your limbs when You assume the Vairaja-rūpa (a form of Brahmā for creation of the universe). Therefore worship of the demigods is actually worship of You.”

|| 10.40.15 ||

tvayy avyayātman puruṣe prakalpitā lokāḥ sa-pālā bahu-jīva-saṅkulāḥ

yathā jale sañjihate jalaukaso 'py udumbare vā maśakā mano-maye

TRANSLATION

All the worlds, with their presiding demigods and teeming populations, originate in You, the inexhaustible Supreme Personality of Godhead. These worlds travel within You, the basis of the mind and senses, just as aquatics swim in the sea or tiny insects burrow within an udumbara fruit.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, "But if this is true, then the worshippers of demigods are also My worshippers. It was seen from the previous verse that the worshipers of demigods are also My worshippers. The scripture also says that those who worship Me surely come to Me. How do you say that the demigod worshippers do not come to Me?"

Akrūra: "The worlds with the demigods and countless living entities move about within Your universal form, like small insects living in the *udumbara* fruit or aquatics in the water. What is that form? They move within Your form composed of material elements such as mind and earth."

"O Lord, whose body is indestructible (*avyayātmā*). By this it is understood that those who worship Your original forms, which are eternal and full of knowledge and bliss (*sac-cid-ānanda*), are Your true worshippers. The universal form (*vairāja-rūpa*), on the other hand, is Your temporary, illusory form, not Your original personal identity (*svarūpa*). Therefore those who worship the demigods who are limbs of that universal form are not Your worshippers. Thus it is correct to say that those who worship the demigods go to the demigods, not to You." Such is implied by this verse.

|| 10.40.16 ||

yāni yānīha rūpāṇi krīḍanārthaṁ bibharṣi hi

tair āmṛṣṭa-śuco lokā mudā gāyanti te yaśaḥ

TRANSLATION

To enjoy Your pastimes You manifest Yourself in various forms in this material world, and these incarnations cleanse away all the unhappiness of those who joyfully chant Your glories.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “But then which are My original forms?” Akrūra answers in this verse: “For the sake of playing and to give mercy to the conditioned souls You appear in this material world in various forms such as Matsya, who crossed the ocean, or as Hayagrīva, who killed the demons Madhu and Kaiṭabha. Thus people glorify these eternal forms of Yours and become free from ignorance, illusion and sadness.”

|| 10.40.17-18 ||

namaḥ kāraṇa-matsyāya pralayābdhi-carāya ca

hayaśīrṣṇe namas tubhyaṁ madhu-kaiṭabha-mṛtyave

akūpārāya bṛhate namo mandara-dhāriṇe

kṣity-uddhāra-vihārāya namaḥ śūkara-mūrtaye

TRANSLATION

I offer my obeisances to You, the cause of the creation, Lord Matsya, who swam about in the ocean of dissolution, to Lord Hayagrīva, the killer of Madhu and Kaiṭabha, to the immense tortoise [Lord Kūrma], who supported Mandara Mountain, and to the boar incarnation [Lord Varāha], who enjoyed lifting the earth.

COMMENTARY

Anticipating Kṛṣṇa may ask, “What are those forms?” Akrūra describes those forms in six verses (17-22).

Akrūra prayed, “I pay my respects to the eternal form of Matsya, who swam about in the ocean of dissolution enjoying His pastimes.” The word *kāraṇa*, which means “whose form is the original cause of creation” implies the eternal nature of Kṛṣṇa’s form, and should also apply to all the forms mentioned in the following verses.

“After this, You took the form of Hayagrīva to kill Madhu and Kaiṭabha. I offer respects to the Lord in His form as Kūrma, who held up Mandara Mountain.” The *Viśva-kośa* dictionary states that the word *akūpārāya* indicates the king of tortoises.

|| 10.40.19 ||

namas te 'dbhuta-siṁhāya sādhu-loka-bhayāpaha

vāmanāya namas tubhyaṁ krānta-tribhuvanāya ca

TRANSLATION

Obeisances to You, the amazing lion [Lord Nṛsiṁha], who remove Your saintly devotees' fear, and to the dwarf Vāmana, who stepped over the three worlds.

|| 10.40.20 ||

namo bhṛguṇāṁ pataye dṛpta-kṣatra-vana-cchide

namas te raghu-varyāya rāvaṇānta-karāya ca

TRANSLATION

Obeisances to You, Lord of the Bhṛgus, who cut down the forest of the conceited royal order, and to Lord Rāma, the best of the Raghu dynasty, who put an end to the demon Rāvaṇa.

|| 10.40.21 ||

namas te vāsudevāya namaḥ saṅkarṣaṇāya ca

pradyumnāyaniruddhāya sātvatāṁ pataye namaḥ

TRANSLATION

Obeisances to You, Lord of the Sātvatas, and to Your forms of Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha.

|| 10.40.22 ||

namo buddhāya śuddhāya daitya-dānava-mohine

mleccha-prāya-kṣatra-hantre namas te kalki-rūpiṇe

TRANSLATION

Obeisances to Your form as the faultless Lord Buddha, who will bewilder the Daityas and Dānavas, and to Lord Kalki, the annihilator of the meat-eaters posing as kings.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra glorified the incarnation of Buddha as *śuddhāya* (pure or faultless), even though he promulgated teachings which contradicted the Vedas.

|| 10.40.23 ||

bhagavan jīva-loko 'yaṁ mohitas tava māyayā

ahaṁ mamety asad-grāho bhrāmyate karma-vartmasu

TRANSLATION

O Supreme Lord, the living entities in this world are bewildered by Your illusory energy. Becoming involved in the false concepts of "I" and "my," they are forced to wander along the paths of fruitive work.

COMMENTARY

After praising the Lord, Akrūra now reveals His delusion and the plight of those wandering along the path of fruitive work.

|| 10.40.24 ||

ahaṁ cātmātmajāgāra-dārārtha-svajanādiṣu

bhramāmi svapna-kalpeṣu mūḍhaḥ satya-dhiyā vibho

TRANSLATION

I too am deluded in this way, O almighty Lord, foolishly thinking my body, children, home, wife, money and followers to be real, though they are actually as unreal as a dream.

|| 10.40.25 ||

anityānātma-duḥkheṣu viparyaya-matir hy aham

dvandvārāmas tamo-viṣṭo na jāne tvātmanaḥ priyam

TRANSLATION

Thus mistaking the temporary for the eternal, my body for my self, and sources of misery for sources of happiness, I have tried to take pleasure in material dualities. Covered in this way by ignorance, I could not recognize You as the real object of my love.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra elaborates on his foolishness in this verse: "Those with a backwards (*viparyaya*) mentality think the temporary fruits of action are eternal, the body is the soul, and the miseries of house and home are bliss. Such fools continually suffer the dualities of happiness and distress in this world. Because I am covered by ignorance, I cannot realize that You are the dearmost beloved of my soul (*ātmanaḥ priyam*)."

|| 10.40.26 ||

yathābudho jalaṁ hitvā praticchannaṁ tad-udbhavaiḥ

abhyeti mṛga-tṛṣṇāṁ vai tadvat tvāhaṁ parāṅ-mukhaḥ

TRANSLATION

Just as a fool overlooks a body of water covered by the vegetation growing in it and chases a mirage, so I have turned away from You.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra then illustrates the previous point with an example: "A foolish man will give up water which is covered by grass and run after a mirage. In the same way, due to ignorance, I abandoned You, who appear covered by *māyā*, turned away from You and turned toward my material body."

|| 10.40.27 ||

notsahe 'haṁ kṛpaṇa-dhīḥ kāma-karma-hataṁ manaḥ

roddhuṁ pramāthibhiś cākṣair hriyamāṇam itas tataḥ

TRANSLATION

My intelligence is so crippled that I cannot find the strength to curb my mind, which is disturbed by material desires and activities and constantly dragged here and there by my obstinate senses.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra prayed, “I cannot control my foolish mind, which is being pulled by my powerfully agitated (*pramāthibhiḥ:prakarṣeṇa mathnad-bhiḥ*) senses. Due to my crippled intelligence (*kṛpaṇa-dhīḥ*), I cannot even gather the courage (*utsāha*) to try to check my rascal mind.”

|| 10.40.28 ||

so ’haṁ tavāṅghry-upagato ’smy asatāṁ durāpaṁ

tac cāpy ahaṁ bhavad-anugraha īśa manye

puṁso bhaved yarhi saṁsaraṇāpavargas

tvayy abja-nābha sad-upāsanayā matiḥ syāt

TRANSLATION

Being thus fallen, I am approaching Your feet for shelter, O Lord, because although the impure can never attain Your feet, I think it is nevertheless possible by Your mercy. Only when one’s material life has ceased, O lotus-naveled Lord, can one develop consciousness of You by serving Your pure devotees.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra prayed, “Though what I have said about myself is true, I surrender unto You. This surrender is hard to attain for the impure, but it is surely possible if I receive Your mercy.”

If Kṛṣṇa asks, “When will you get My mercy?”

Akrūra replies, “O lotus-naveled one, when one worships Your pure devotees, consciousness of You develops.”

Kṛṣṇa: “When will happen?”

Akrūra: “When a person’s material life is finished.”

Kṛṣṇa: “And when is one’s material life finished?”

Akrūra: “When He receives Your causeless mercy.”

By this reasoning, first there is the causeless mercy of pure devotees, followed by the beginning of the cessation of material life. Then, by serving pure devotees one develops Kṛṣṇa consciousness. This sequence has been described previously.

|| 10.40.29 ||

namo vijñāna-mātrāya sarva-pratyaya-hetave

puruṣeśa-pradhānāya brahmaṇe ’nanta-śaktaye

TRANSLATION

Obeisances to the Supreme Absolute Truth, the possessor of unlimited energies. He is the embodiment of pure, transcendental knowledge, the source of all kinds of awareness, and the predominator of the forces of nature that rule over the living being.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra surrenders himself to Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet in two verses (29-30).

Akrūra prayed, “I will be able to understand You in proportion to how much realization (*vijñāna*) You give me. You are the source of all knowledge (*sarva-pratyaya-hetave*) as well, and You are the Supersoul (*puruṣa*) inspiring all activities. As time You control

(*eśa*) everyone and give the result of action. As *māyā* (*pradhāna*) You bind up the living entity, and as the Supreme Absolute Truth (*brahmaṇe*) You liberate them. As Bhagavān (*ananta-saktaye*) You give us devotion to Yourself and thus Your work is complete."

|| 10.40.30 ||

namas te vāsudevāya sarva-bhūta-kṣayāya ca

hṛṣīkeśa namas tubhyaṁ prapannaṁ pāhi māṁ prabho

TRANSLATION

O son of Vāsudeva, obeisances to You, within whom all living beings reside. O Lord of the mind and senses, again I offer You my obeisances. O master, please protect me, who am surrendered unto You.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra prayed, "O Hṛṣīkeśa, please protect me! Please engage my mind and senses in Your service, so that they do not become attached to my wife and sons."

Thus ends the commentary on the Fortieth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Forty-one

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma Enter Mathurā

|| 10.41.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

stuvatas tasya bhagavān darśayitvā jale vapuḥ

bhūyaḥ samāharat kṛṣṇo naṭo nāṭyam ivātmanaḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: While Akrūra was still offering prayers, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa withdrew His form that He had revealed in the water, just as an actor winds up his performance.

COMMENTARY

In this chapter Kṛṣṇa goes to Mathurā and enchants the womenfolk. After killing the washerman, Kṛṣṇa awarded the cloth weaver and the garland maker named Sudāmā.

After showing His majestic Viṣṇu form to Akrūra in the Yamunā at Akrūra Ghat and receiving Akrūra's prayers, Śrī Kṛṣṇa withdrew (*samāharat*) that vision just as an actor winds up his performance. Kṛṣṇa made that form disappear without asking Akrūra. This disregard for Akrūra is expressed by the use of the sixth case (*tasya*), which expresses informality, instead of the second case (*tam*).

|| 10.41.1 ||

so 'pi cāntarhitaṁ vīkṣya jalād unmajya satvaraḥ

kṛtvā cāvaśyakaṁ sarvaṁ vismito ratham āgamat

TRANSLATION

When Akrūra saw the vision disappear, he came out of the water and quickly finished his various ritual duties. He then returned to the chariot, astonished.

|| 10.41.3 ||

tam apṛcchad dhṛṣīkeśaḥ kiṁ te dṛṣṭam ivādbhutam

bhūmau viyati toye vā tathā tvāṁ lakṣayāmahe

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa asked Akrūra: Have you seen something wonderful on the earth, in the sky or in the water? From your appearance, We think you have.

COMMENTARY

Seeing the astonishment on Akrūra's face and in his eyes, Kṛṣṇa asked him, "It appears that you must have seen something very amazing, for your eyes are wide with wonder and full of tears."

|| 10.41.4 ||

śrī-akrūra uvāca

adbhutānīha yāvanti bhūmau viyati vā jale

tvayi viśvātmake tāni kiṁ me 'dṛṣṭaṁ vipaśyataḥ

TRANSLATION

Śrī Akrūra said: Whatever wonderful things the earth, sky or water contain, all exist in You. Since You encompass everything, when I am seeing You, what have I not seen?

COMMENTARY

“Kṛṣṇa has shown me all His opulences.” (10.39.44-55) Ascertaining this from Kṛṣṇa’s question, Akrūra speaks with gleeful discrimina-tion: “Whatever wonderful things there are on the earth, in the sky or in the water all exist in You. Seeing You before me, what more remarkable sight remains? Rather, everything is indeed seen!”

|| 10.41.5 ||

yatrādbhutāni sarvāṇi bhūmau viyati vā jale

taṁ tvānupaśyato brahman kiṁ me dṛṣṭam ihādbhutam

TRANSLATION

And now that I am seeing You, O Supreme Absolute Truth, in whom reside all amazing things on the earth, in the sky and in the water, what amazing things could I see in this world?

COMMENTARY

Akrūra said, “What was amazing was not all the things I saw within You, but that form which contained everything. I am gazing upon You, within whom all amazing things exist. There are many amazing things on the land and in the water, but I realize that Your form standing before me is more amazing than all things of the universe. The form I see here is thousands of times more amazing than the sight of Vaikuṇṭha with Saṅkarṣaṇa and all of Nārāyaṇa’s attendants. O Brahman, you are the Supreme Absolute Truth, the Lord of all Lords. By Your mercy my foolishness of thinking that You are simply my nephew has disappeared.”

|| 10.41.6 ||

ity uktvā codayām āsa syandanaṁ gāndinī-sutaḥ

mathurām anayad rāmaṁ kṛṣṇaṁ caiva dinātyaye

TRANSLATION

With these words, Akrūra, the son of Gāndinī, began driving the chariot onward. At the end of the day he arrived in Mathurā with Lord Balarāma and Lord Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

Gāndinīsutaḥ means the son of Gāndhinī, Akrūra.

|| 10.41.7 ||

mārge grāma-janā rājaṁs tatra tatropasaṅgatāḥ

vasudeva-sutau vīkṣya prītā dṛṣṭiṁ na cādaduḥ

TRANSLATION

Wherever they passed along the road, O King, the village people came forward and looked upon the two sons of Vasudeva with great pleasure. In fact, the villagers could not withdraw their eyes from Them.

COMMENTARY

Seeing Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma passing on the road, the people could not take their eyes off of Them, and they became stunned.

|| 10.41.8 ||

tāvad vrajaukasas tatra nanda-gopādayo 'grataḥ

puropavanam āsādya pratīkṣanto 'vatasthire

TRANSLATION

Nanda Mahārāja and the other residents of Vṛndāvana, having reached Mathurā ahead of the chariot, had stopped at a garden on the outskirts of the city to wait for Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma.

COMMENTARY

Nanda Mahārāja and the cowherd men waited for Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma in a garden outside the city of Mathurā. Not being able to keep up with the swift chariot of Akrūra, Nanda Mahārāja and the cowherd men had given up the main road and taken a short cut. Thus they arrived earlier. Besides, Akrūra was delayed because of bathing in the Yamunā.

|| 10.41.9 ||

tān sametyāha bhagavān akrūraṁ jagad-īśvaraḥ

gṛhītvā pāṇinā pāṇiṁ praśritaṁ prahasann iva

TRANSLATION

After joining Nanda and the others, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, the controller of the universe, took humble Akrūra's hand in His own and, smiling, spoke as follows.

COMMENTARY

While seeming to smile, Kṛṣṇa spoke to Akrūra with humility (*praśritam*). Kṛṣṇa smiled in order to please Akrūra, but internally He was full of grief on seeing the city of Mathurā because of remembering His beloved Vraja.

|| 10.41.10 ||

bhavān praviśatām agre saha-yānaḥ purīṁ gṛham

vayaṁ tv ihāvamucyātha tato drakṣyāmahe purīm

TRANSLATION

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] Take the chariot and enter the city ahead of us. Then go home. After resting here a while, we will go to see the city.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, "You go ahead to your house in the city with the chariot. We will rest (*avamucya*) here and then see the city."

|| 10.41.11 ||

śrī-akrūra uvāca

nāhaṁ bhavadbhyāṁ rahitaḥ pravekṣye mathurāṁ prabho

tyaktuṁ nārhasi māṁ nātha bhaktaṁ te bhakta-vatsala

TRANSLATION

Śrī Akrūra said: O master, without the two of You I shall not enter Mathurā. I am Your devotee, O Lord, so it is not fair for You to abandon me, since You are always affectionate to Your devotees.

|| 10.41.12 ||

āgaccha yāma gehān naḥ sa-nāthān kurv adhokṣaja

sahāgrajaḥ sa-gopālaiḥ suhṛdbhiś ca suhṛttama

TRANSLATION

Come, let us go to my house with Your elder brother, the cowherd men and Your companions. O best of friends, O transcendental Lord, in this way please grace my house with its master.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra said, “Kṛṣṇa, come to my home along with the Vrajavāsīs. I will not visit Kaṁsa and inform him of Your arrival now. How can I announce that he will die the day after tomorrow? I do not have a speck of fear from him because I have seen Your powers in the Yamunā. Also, there will be no lack of things in my house. Therefore let us all go there.”

|| 10.41.13 ||

punīhi pāda-rajasā gṛhān no gṛha-medhinām

yac-chaucenānutṛpyanti pitaraḥ sāgnayaḥ surāḥ

TRANSLATION

I am simply an ordinary householder attached to ritual sacrifices, so please purify my home with the dust of Your lotus feet. By that act of purification, my forefathers, the sacrificial fires and the demigods will all become satisfied.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra said, “The purified (*chaucenā*) water from washing the dust from Your feet, which will fall on my head and in the courtyard of my house, will satisfy all the demigods, sacrificial fires and my ancestors.”

|| 10.41.14 ||

avanijyāṅghri-yugalam āsīt śłokyo balir mahān

aiśvaryam atulaṁ lebhe gatiṁ caikāntināṁ tu yā

TRANSLATION

By bathing Your feet, the exalted Bali Mahārāja attained not only glorious fame and unequaled power but also the final destination of pure devotees.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra said, "By washing Your feet Bali Mahārāja attained a position of great fame (*śłokyaḥ*). He attained unrivaled power and the destination of the pure devotees."

|| 10.41.15 ||

āpas te 'ṅghry-avanejanyas trīû lokān śucayo 'punan

śirasādhatta yāḥ śarvaḥ svar yātāḥ sagarātmajāḥ

TRANSLATION

The water of the river Ganges has purified the three worlds, having become transcendental by bathing Your feet. Lord Śiva accepted that water on his head, and by that water's grace the sons of King Sagara attained to heaven.

COMMENTARY

The word āpaḥ refers to the water of the Gaṅgā. Akrūra said, "That spiritual (*śucayo*) water of the Gaṅgā, which washed Your feet, is held upon Śiva's head. It purifies the three worlds and awarded *svarga-mukti* to the descendants of King Sagara."

|| 10.41.16 ||

deva-deva jagan-nātha puṇya-śravaṇa-kīrtana

yadūttamottamaḥ-śloka nārāyaṇa namo 'stu te

TRANSLATION

O Lord of lords, master of the universe, O You whose glories it is most pious to hear and chant! O best of the Yadus, O You whose fame is recounted in excellent poetry ! O Supreme Lord Nārāyaṇa, I offer You my obeisances.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra said, "O Devadeva, You shine among all the demigods. Today please illuminate my house. You are the Lord of the universe (*jagannātha*), so now become the Lord of my

house. You purify anyone who hears and chants Your glories (*puṇya-śravaṇa-kīrtana*), so please purify my house today. O best of the Yadus (*yadūttama*). please come to my house, as I am also a Yadu. O Uttamaḥ-śloka, famous as the deliverer of the fallen, please purify my fallen household."

|| 10.41.17 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

āyāsye bhavato geham aham arya-samanvitaḥ

yadu-cakra-druhaṁ hatvā vitariṣye suhṛt-priyam

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord said: I will come to Your house with My elder brother, but first I must satisfy My friends and well-wishers by killing the enemy of the Yadu clan.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, "O Akrūra, you have correctly called Me the best of the Yadus. Therefore first I will kill Kaṁsa, the enemy of the Yadu clan, and then I will come to your house."

|| 10.41.18 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

evam ukto bhagavatā so 'krūro vimanā iva

purīṁ praviṣṭaḥ kaṁsāya karmāvedya gṛhaṁ yayau

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus addressed by the Lord, Akrūra entered the city with a heavy heart. He informed King Kaṁsa of the success of his mission and then went home.

|| 10.41.19 ||

athāparāhne bhagavān kṛṣṇaḥ saṅkarṣaṇānvitaḥ

mathurāṁ prāviśad gopair didṛkṣuḥ parivāritaḥ

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa desired to see Mathurā, so toward evening He took Lord Balarāma and the cowherd boys with Him and entered the city.

COMMENTARY

In the afternoon, Kṛṣṇa along with Balarāma and a circle (*parivāritaḥ*) of His cowherd friends entered Mathurā to see the city.

|| 10.41.20-23 ||

dadarśa tāṁ sphāṭika-tuṅga-gopura- dvārāṁ bṛhad-dhema-kapāṭa-toraṇām

tāmrāra-koṣṭhāṁ parikhā-durāsadām udyāna-ramyopavanopaśobhitām

sauvarṇa-śṛṅgāṭaka-harmya-niṣkuṭaiḥ śreṇī-sabhābhir bhavanair upaskṛtām

vaidūrya-vajrāmala-nīla-vidrumair muktā-haridbhir valabhīṣu vediṣu

juṣṭeṣu jālāmukha-randhra-kuṭṭimeṣv āviṣṭa-pārāvata-barhi-nāditām

saṁsikta-rathyāpaṇa-mārga-catvarāṁ prakīrṇa-mālyāṅkura-lāja-taṇḍulām

āpūrṇa-kumbhair dadhi-candanokṣitaiḥ prasūna-dīpāvalibhiḥ sa-pallavaiḥ

sa-vṛnda-rambhā-kramukaiḥ sa-ketubhiḥ sv-alaṅkṛta-dvāra-gṛhāṁ sa-paṭṭikaiḥ

TRANSLATION

The Lord saw Mathurā, with its tall gates and household entrances made of crystal, its immense archways and main doors of gold, its granaries and other storehouses of copper and brass, and its impregnable moats. Beautifying the city were pleasant gardens and parks. The main intersections were fashioned of gold, and there were mansions with private pleasure gardens, along with guildhalls and many other buildings. Mathurā resounded with the calls of peacocks and pet turtledoves, who sat in the small openings of the lattice windows and on the gem-studded floors, and also on the columned balconies and on the ornate rafters in front of the houses. These balconies and rafters

were adorned with vaidūrya stones, diamonds, crystal quartz, sapphires, coral, pearls and emeralds. All the royal avenues and commercial streets were sprinkled with water, as were the side roads and courtyards, and flower garlands, newly grown sprouts, parched grains and rice had been scattered about everywhere. Gracing the houses' doorways were elaborately decorated pots filled with water, which were bedecked with mango leaves, smeared with yogurt and sandalwood paste, and encircled by flower petals and ribbons. Near the pots were flags, rows of lamps, bunches of flowers and the trunks of banana and betel-nut trees.

COMMENTARY

Four verses (20-23) describe the city of Mathurā. The tall towers and gates as well as the gates of the houses were made of crystal. The door panels and outer doors were made of gold. The storerooms (*koṣthām*) for grains were made of brass and copper. Surrounded by moats, the city was difficult to enter.

(Texts 21-22) The intersections were made of gold. There were mansions with large gardens and buildings for the different craftsmen to meet, as well as other dwellings. The rafters were inlaid with emeralds and other jewels. The buildings echoed with the cries of the doves and peacocks which sat on the rafters, floors and balconies. According to Kṣīra Swāmī, *valabhīṣu* refers to the peak of the roof, and according to Halāyudha *valabhī* refers to the roof. According to Trikāṇḍa Śesa, a *valabhī* is a lookout tower. In any case it refers to the top part of the building.

Vediṣu refers to a terrace for relaxing made in front of a house out of bricks and so on. The windows had lattices to let in fresh air. The floors (*kuṭṭimeṣu*) were inset with mosaics of precious gems. There were main roads (*rathyā*), lanes lined with shops (*āpana*), pathways (*mārga*) and courtyards.

(Text 23) Kṛṣṇa saw that the doors of the houses were nicely ornamented with full water pots, decorated with flowers, and smeared with yogurt and sandalwood paste, and five other auspicious elements.

The full water pots were placed in the following manner: On either side of each doorway, above piles of raw rice, is a pot. Encircling each pot are flower petals, on its neck are ribbons and in its mouth are leaves of mango and other trees. Above each pot, on a gold plate, are rows of lamps. On either side of each pot are banana tree trunks. In

front and behind each pot is a betel nut tree. Flags are leaning against the pots and ornamental arches are arrayed here and there.

|| 10.41.24 ||

tāṁ sampraviṣṭau vasudeva-nandanau vṛtau vayasyair naradeva-vartmanā

draṣṭuṁ samīyus tvaritāḥ pura-striyo harmyāṇi caivāruruhur nṛpotsukāḥ

TRANSLATION

The women of Mathurā hurriedly assembled and went forth to see the two sons of Vasudeva as They entered the city on the King's road, surrounded by Their cowherd boyfriends. Some of the women, my dear King, eagerly climbed to the roofs of their houses to see Them.

COMMENTARY

In order to see Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma entering Mathurā on the wide royal road, the women of Mathurā came forward (*samīyuḥ*) in groups. Some ladies climbed onto the roof tops of the mansions.

|| 10.41.25 ||

kāścid viparyag-dhṛta-vastra-bhūṣaṇā vismṛtya caikaṁ yugaleṣv athāparāḥ

kṛtaika-patra-śravanaika-nūpurā nāṅktvā dvitīyaṁ tv aparāś ca locanam

TRANSLATION

Some of the ladies put their clothes and ornaments on backwards, others forgot one of their earrings or ankle bells, and others applied makeup to one eye but not the other.

COMMENTARY

This verse and the next describe the eagerness of the women of Mathurā. In rushing out to see Kṛṣṇa, they put their clothing on backwards (*viparyak*) and forgot some ornaments. Thus they appeared with only one earring and one anklet. Some women applied *kajjala* (mascara) only to their left eye.

|| 10.41.26 ||

aśnantya ekās tad apāsya sotsavā abhyajyamānā akṛtopamajjanāḥ

svapantya utthāya niśamya niḥsvanaṁ prapāyayantyo 'rbham apohya mātaraḥ

TRANSLATION

Those who were taking their meals abandoned them, others went out without finishing their baths or massages, women who were sleeping at once rose when they heard the commotion, and mothers breast-feeding their infants simply put them aside.

COMMENTARY

Some women gave up eating their meals, and some even interrupted ceremonies (*sa-utsavaḥ*) such as wedding rites and abruptly left without circumambulating their husbands. Others, being massaged with oil by their maidservants, gave up the massage. Without even completing their bath, others left while their bodies were still wet. Women, who were attentively feeding their newborn babies, immediately gave them up and left.

|| 10.41.27 ||

manāṁsi tāsām aravinda-locanaḥ pragalbha-līlā-hasitāvalokaiḥ

jahāra matta-dviradendra-vikramo dṛśāṁ dadac chrī-ramaṇātmanotsavam

TRANSLATION

The lotus-eyed Lord, smiling as He recalled His bold pastimes, captivated those ladies' minds with His glances. He walked with the gait of a lordly elephant in rut, creating a festival for their eyes with His transcendental body, which is the source of pleasure for the divine goddess of fortune.

COMMENTARY

With that body (*ātmanā*) which is radiantly beautiful (*śrī: śrīyā: śobhayā*), Kṛṣṇa gave pleasure (*ramaṇa:ramayati*) and playful enjoyment to the ladies of Mathurā. His handsome body created a festival (*utsavam*) for their eyes and stole their minds. This indicates that by pleasing their eyes Kṛṣṇa bewildered them, and without their noticing stole the jewel of their minds.

|| 10.41.28 ||

dṛṣṭvā muhuḥ śrutam anudruta-cetasas taṁ
tat-prekṣaṇotsmita-sudhokṣaṇa-labdha-mānāḥ

ānanda-mūrtim upaguhya dṛśātma-labdhaṁ

hṛṣyat-tvaco jahur anantam arindamādhim

TRANSLATION

The ladies of Mathurā had repeatedly heard about Kṛṣṇa, and thus as soon as they saw Him their hearts melted. They felt honored that He was sprinkling upon them the nectar of His glances and broad smiles. Taking Him into their hearts through their eyes, they embraced Him, the embodiment of all ecstasy, and as their bodily hairs stood on end, O subduer of enemies, they forgot the unlimited distress caused by His absence.

COMMENTARY

Their hearts melted upon looking at Kṛṣṇa. They felt greatly honored to be sprinkled with the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's sweet smiles and glances. They freely embraced the embodiment of bliss (*ānanda-mūrtim*) whom they had obtained in their minds by glancing at Kṛṣṇa from just one of their eyes. By this they gave up the distress generated from His absence.

By the phrase "O subduer of enemies" (*arim-dama*), Śukadeva Gosvāmī implies that by hearing and meditating on such pastimes as this, one can conquer the enemies of lust, anger, greed and envy.

|| 10.41.29 ||

prāsāda-śikharārūḍhāḥ prīty-utphulla-mukhāmbujāḥ

abhyavarṣan saumanasyaiḥ pramadā bala-keśavau

TRANSLATION

Their lotus faces blooming with affection, the ladies who had climbed to the roofs of the mansions rained down showers of flowers upon Lord Balarāma and Lord Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

The women began to shower flowers (*saumanasyaiḥ*) in the form of their smiles, or they showered flowers in the form of actions indicating that their minds (*su-manasām*) were delighted in love.

|| 10.41.30 ||

dadhy-akṣataiḥ soda-pātraiḥ srag-gandhair abhyupāyanaiḥ

tāv ānarcuḥ pramuditās tatra tatra dvijātayaḥ

TRANSLATION

Brāhmaṇas standing along the way honored the two Lords with presentations of yogurt, unbroken barleycorns, pots full of water, garlands, fragrant substances such as sandalwood paste, and other items of worship.

|| 10.41.31 ||

ūcuḥ paurā aho gopyas tapaḥ kim acaran mahat

yā hy etāv anupaśyanti nara-loka-mahotsavau

TRANSLATION

The women of Mathurā exclaimed: Oh, what severe austerities the gopīs must have performed to be able to regularly see Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, who are the greatest source of pleasure for all mankind!

COMMENTARY

The word (*paurā*) refers to the women living in the city (*pura*) of Mathurā.

|| 10.41.32 ||

rajakaṁ kañcid āyāntaṁ raṅga-kāraṁ gadāgrajaḥ

dṛṣṭvāyācata vāsāṁsi dhautāny aty-uttamāni ca

TRANSLATION

Seeing a washerman approaching who had been dyeing some clothes, Kṛṣṇa asked him for the finest laundered garments he had.

COMMENTARY

One who washes clothing is called *rajakaḥ*. If he also dyes clothing he is called *raṅgakāra*.

|| 10.41.33 ||

dehy āvayoḥ samucitāny aṅga vāsāṁsi cārhatoḥ

bhaviṣyati paraṁ śreyo dātus te nātra saṁśayaḥ

TRANSLATION

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] Please give suitable garments to the two of Us, who certainly deserve them. If you grant this charity, you will undoubtedly receive the greatest benefit.

|| 10.41.34 ||

sa yācito bhagavatā paripūrṇena sarvataḥ

sākṣepaṁ ruṣitaḥ prāha bhṛtyo rājñaḥ su-durmadaḥ

TRANSLATION

Thus requested by the Supreme Lord, who is perfectly complete in all respects, that arrogant servant of the King became angry and replied insultingly.

|| 10.41.35 ||

īdṛśāny eva vāsāṁsī nityaṁ giri-vane-caraḥ

paridhatta kim udvṛttā rāja-dravyāṇy abhīpsatha

TRANSLATION

[The washerman said:] You impudent boys! You're accustomed to roaming the mountains and forests, and yet You would dare put on such clothes as these! These are the King's possessions You're asking for!

COMMENTARY

Udvṛttāḥ means one who has deviated (*ut*) from good conduct (*vṛttā*). The washerman said, “O You who have transgressed the bounds of good behavior! O ill mannered boys! You dare to put on the King’s clothing?”

By the influence of mother Sarasvatī, the washerman’s words can also mean: “O boys of excellent character (*udvṛttāḥ:utkṛṣṭa-caritrāḥ*), who herd cows on Govardhana. Would You ever wear such mundane clothes as these? Certainly not! Therefore, even in play why do You want to don the impure things of a king?”

The *amara-koṣa* dictionary says *vṛttam padye caritre ca*, which means the word *vṛttāḥ* can indicate “a footstep” or “activity,” and is used in all three genders.

|| 10.41.36 ||

yātāśu bāliśā maivaṁ prārthyaṁ yadi jijīvīṣā

badhnanti ghnanti lumpanti dṛptaṁ rāja-kulāni vai

TRANSLATION

Fools, get out of here quickly! Don’t beg like this if You want to stay alive. When someone is too bold, the King’s men arrest him and kill him and take all his property.

COMMENTARY

The normal meaning of the verse is clear. However, there is another meaning. The washerman said, “O Bhagavān, who on the pretext of taking three steps of land, claimed the body of Bali (*bālisā*)! You should not request in this way if You want to keep me alive. Just as Bali fell into danger by giving in charity, if I give You clothes, then my life will be over today. The servants of the king will bind up that person who is not afraid (*dṛptaṁ*) of Kaṁsa, and after informing Kaṁsa they will kill him and loot his house.”

|| 10.41.37 ||

evaṁ vikatthamānasya kupito devakī-sutaḥ

rajakasya karāgreṇa śiraḥ kāyād apātayat

TRANSLATION

As the washerman thus spoke brazenly, the son of Devakī became angry, and then merely with His fingertips He separated the man's head from his body.

|| 10.41.38 ||

tasyānujīvinaḥ sarve vāsaḥ-kośān visṛjya vai

dudruvuḥ sarvato mārgaṁ vāsāṁsi jagṛhe 'cyutaḥ

TRANSLATION

The washerman's assistants all dropped their bundles of clothes and fled down the road, scattering in all directions. Lord Kṛṣṇa then took the clothes.

COMMENTARY

The assistants of the washerman dropped the bundles of clothing (*vāsaḥ-kośān*) and fled.

|| 10.41.39 ||

vasitvātma-priye vastre kṛṣṇaḥ saṅkarṣaṇas tathā

śeṣāṇy ādatta gopebhyo visṛjya bhuvi kānicit

TRANSLATION

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma put on pairs of garments that especially pleased Them, and then Kṛṣṇa distributed the remaining clothes among the cowherd boys, leaving some scattered on the ground.

|| 10.41.40 ||

tatas tu vāyakaḥ prītas tayor veṣam akalpayat

vicitra-varṇaiś caileyair ākalpair anurūpataḥ

TRANSLATION

Thereupon a weaver came forward and, feeling affection for the Lords, nicely adorned Their attire with cloth ornaments of various colors.

COMMENTARY

The *vāyakaḥ* is one who weaves using bamboo. He dressed Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma in soft silk cloth of gold color embedded with jewels and ornaments. The word *anurūpataḥ* indicates that the colors matched nicely. *Anurūpataḥ* also means that in Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma's pastime of becoming wrestlers, cloth ornaments will be suitable because they will not pain Their bodies.

|| 10.41.41 ||

nānā-lakṣaṇa-veṣābhyāṁ kṛṣṇa-rāmau virejatuḥ

sv-alaṅkṛtau bāla-gajau parvaṇīva sitetarau

TRANSLATION

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma looked resplendent, each in His own unique, wonderfully ornamented outfit. They resembled a pair of young elephants, one white and the other black, decorated for a festive occasion.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were decorated with cloth suitable for Their different colored bodies. They appeared like young processional elephants, one white and the other black (*sitetarau*) at a festival.

|| 10.41.42 ||

tasya prasanno bhagavān prādāt sārūpyam ātmanaḥ

śriyaṁ ca paramāṁ loke balaiśvarya-smṛtīndriyam

TRANSLATION

Pleased with the weaver, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa blessed him that after death he would achieve the liberation of attaining a form like the Lord's, and that while in this world he would enjoy supreme opulence, physical strength, influence, memory and sensory vigor.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa was very happy so He immediately blessed the weaver with dexterity of the senses, memory, power and strength. After death he would attain the spiritual body of a cowherd.

|| 10.41.43 ||

tataḥ sudāmno bhavanaṁ mālā-kārasya jagmatuḥ

tau dṛṣṭvā sa samutthāya nanāma śirasā bhuvi

TRANSLATION

The two Lords then went to the house of the garland-maker Sudāmā. When Sudāmā saw Them he at once stood up and then bowed down, placing his head on the ground.

COMMENTARY

This verse describes how after dressing and putting on ornaments, one put on a garland.

|| 10.41.44 ||

tayor āsanam ānīya pādyaṁ cārghyārhaṇādibhiḥ

pūjāṁ sānugayoś cakre srak-tāmbūlānulepanaiḥ

TRANSLATION

After offering Them seats and bathing Their feet, Sudāmā worshiped Them and Their companions with arghya, garlands, pān, sandalwood paste and other presentations.

|| 10.41.45 ||

prāha naḥ sārthakaṁ janma pāvitaṁ ca kulaṁ prabho

pitṛ-devarṣayo mahyaṁ tuṣṭā hy āgamanena vām

TRANSLATION

[Sudāmā said:] O Lord, my birth is now sanctified and my family free of contamination. Now that You both have come here, my forefathers, the demigods and the great sages are certainly all satisfied with me.

|| 10.41.46 ||

bhavantau kila viśvasya jagataḥ kāraṇaṁ param

avatīrṇāv ihāṁśena kṣemāya ca bhavāya ca

TRANSLATION

You two Lords are the ultimate cause of this entire universe. To bestow sustenance and prosperity upon this realm, You have descended with Your plenary expansions.

|| 10.41.47 ||

na hi vāṁ viṣamā dṛṣṭiḥ suhṛdor jagad-ātmanoḥ

samayoḥ sarva-bhūteṣu bhajantaṁ bhajator api

TRANSLATION

Because You are the well-wishing friends and Supreme Soul of the whole universe, You regard all with unbiased vision. Therefore, although You reciprocate Your devotees' loving worship, You always remain equally disposed toward all living beings.

COMMENTARY

Sudāmā said, "Though You are equal to all, You show special mercy to Your devotees (*bhajantaṁ bhajator api*)." Kṛṣṇa confirms this in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.29):

> *samo 'haṁ sarva-bhūteṣu, na me dveṣyo 'sti na priyaḥ,*
>
> *ye bhajanti tu māṁ bhaktyā, mayi te teṣu cāpy aham*
>
> "I envy no one, nor am I partial to anyone. I am equal to all. But whoever renders service unto Me in devotion is a friend, is in Me, and I am also a friend to him."

Sudāmā said, "Actually, You are merciful to that person who worships You, whether he is a *brāhmaṇa* or a dog eater, without regard for his birth or caste. Because of this You have granted all success to me, a garland maker, and the weaver."

|| 10.41.48 ||

tāv ajñāpayataṁ bhṛtyaṁ kim ahaṁ karavāṇi vām

puṁso 'ty-anugraho hy eṣa bhavadbhir yan niyujyate

TRANSLATION

Please order me, Your servant, to do whatever You wish. To be enga-ged by You in some service is certainly a great blessing for anyone.

|| 10.41.49 ||

ity abhipretya rājendra sudāmā prīta-mānasaḥ

śastaiḥ su-gandhaiḥ kusumair mālā viracitā dadau

TRANSLATION

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] O best of kings, having spoken these words, Sudāmā could understand what Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma wanted. Thus with great pleasure he presented Them with garlands of fresh, fragrant flowers.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, "O Sudāmā, do whatever you think is right. That is My order. It will be very good if you do that." Sudāmā understood Kṛṣṇa's command by realizing, "I must give Them garlands since I am a garland maker." Then he gave an excellent, extremely fragrant garland, which was made of attractive, soft fresh flowers. The singular word *mālā* (garland) is used to indicate that though Sudāmā gave two garlands, one to each brother, he secretly gave one most beautiful garland to Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.41.50 ||

tābhiḥ sv-alaṅkṛtau prītau kṛṣṇa-rāmau sahānugau

praṇatāya prapannāya dadatur vara-dau varān

TRANSLATION

Beautifully adorned with these garlands, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were delighted, and so were Their companions. The two Lords then offered the surrendered Sudāmā, who was bowing down before Them, whatever benedictions he desired.

|| 10.41.51 ||

so 'pi vavre 'calāṁ bhaktiṁ tasminn evākhilātmani

tad-bhakteṣu ca sauhārdaṁ bhūteṣu ca dayāṁ parām

TRANSLATION

Sudāmā chose unshakable devotion for Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Soul of all existence; friendship with His devotees; and transcendental compassion for all living beings.

|| 10.41.52 ||

iti tasmai varaṁ dattvā śriyaṁ cānvaya-vardhinīm

balam āyur yaśaḥ kāntiṁ nirjagāma sahāgrajaḥ

TRANSLATION

Not only did Lord Kṛṣṇa grant Sudāmā these benedictions, but He also awarded him strength, long life, fame, beauty and ever-increasing prosperity for his family. Then Kṛṣṇa and His elder brother took Their leave.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa gave the garland maker strength, power, wealth and beauty though he did not desire them. This was a response to his enthusiastic desire to serve Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. Thus, we understand, in all cases Kṛṣṇa is most affectionate to His devotees.

Thus ends the commentary on the Forty First Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Forty-two

The Breaking of the Sacrificial Bow

|| 10.42.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

atha vrajan rāja-pathena mādhavaḥ striyaṁ gṛhītāṅga-vilepa-bhājanām

vilokya kubjāṁ yuvatīṁ varānanāṁ papraccha yāntīṁ prahasan rāsa-pradaḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: As He walked down the King's road, Lord Mādhava then saw a young hunchback woman with an attractive face, who carried a tray of fragrant ointments as she walked along. The bestower of the ecstasy of love smiled and inquired from her as follows.

COMMENTARY

This chapter describes the curing of the hunchback Kubjā, breaking the bow, the slaying of Kaṁsa's soldiers, Kaṁsa's seeing bad omens and the festivity at the wrestling arena.

Kṛṣṇa is described as *rasa-pradaḥ*, the bestower of ecstatic mellows. To Kubjā, Kṛṣṇa gave *mādhurya-rasa* (conjugal love), to His comrades He gave *hāsya-rasa* (laughter), and *adbhuta-rasa* (wonder) to the general public.

Kubjā was carrying various body ointments such as sandalwood paste. This young hunchbacked girl was actually a partial expansion of the Kṛṣṇa's wife Satyabhāmā. Satyabhāmā is Kṛṣṇa's internal energy known as Bhū-śakti, and this expansion of hers, known as Prthivī, represents the earth, which was bent down by the great burden of countless wicked rulers. Prthivī, a topmost devotee, showed her devotion by offering the essence of the earth element, fragrance, represented by the sandalwood paste to Kṛṣṇa, whom she met on the road.

Accepting the sandalwood with great joy, Kṛṣṇa bestowed *mādhurya-rasa* on her and said, "O My devotee earth! Know that the burdens caused by Kaṁsa and others have now been taken by Me. Therefore now you should stand up straight." Comforting her in this way, Kṛṣṇa straightened out the blissful Kubjā. Some *ācāryas* explain the event in this way.

|| 10.42.2 ||

kā tvaṁ varorv etad u hānulepanaṁ kasyāṅgane vā kathayasva sādhu naḥ

dehy āvayor aṅga-vilepam uttamaṁ śreyas tatas te na cirād bhaviṣyati

TRANSLATION

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] Who are you, O beautiful-thighed one? Ah, ointment! Who is it for, my dear lady? Please tell Us truthfully. Give Us both some of your finest ointment and you will soon gain a great boon.

COMMENTARY

Though Kṛṣṇa addressed Kubjā in a joking mood, "O beautiful-thighed one" (*vara-ūru*), He also revealed His inner desire. Kṛṣṇa said, "Who are you? For whom is this ointment meant?"

|| 10.42.3 ||

sairandhry uvāca

dāsy asmy ahaṁ sundara kaṁsa-sammatā trivakra-nāmā hy anulepa-karmaṇi

mad-bhāvitaṁ bhoja-pater ati-priyaṁ vinā yuvāṁ ko 'nyatamas tad arhati

TRANSLATION

The maidservant replied: O handsome one, I am a servant of King Kaṁsa, who highly regards me for the ointments I make. My name is Trivakrā. Who else but You two deserve my ointments, which the lord of the Bhojas likes so much?

COMMENTARY

Because there is no other modifying word used with Kubjā's statement "I am a servant" (*dāsy asmy ahaṁ*), "of Yours" is implied by Kṛṣṇa's proximity. The word "your" is not explicitly used because that would have been an untruth and also a disclosure of her feelings. Kubjā hints at her conjugal desire for Kṛṣṇa alone by using the singular form of the word *sundara* (O handsome one!). However, she then used the dual form *yuvām*, "for both of You," to try to hide her conjugal sentiment.

Kubjā was called Trivakrā because her body was bent in three places: neck, chest and waist. The word *hi* (indeed) indicates that, "Because of my hunchback deformity Kaṁsa respects me only for my work of preparing body ointments, and nothing else." Kubjā reveals her purity by this statement. Hence, she was not engaged in any bodily service or intimate relationship with Kaṁsa.

|| 10.42.4 ||

rūpa-peśala-mādhurya hasitālāpa-vīkṣitaiḥ

dharṣitātmā dadau sāndram ubhayor anulepanam

TRANSLATION

Her mind overwhelmed by Kṛṣṇa's beauty, charm, sweetness, smiles, words and glances, Trivakrā gave both Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma generous amounts of ointment.

COMMENTARY

Overwhelmed by Kṛṣṇa's beauty (*rūpa*), charms (*peśala*) and sweetness, Kubjā gave the ointment to Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma.

|| 10.42.5 ||

tatas tāv aṅga-rāgeṇa sva-varṇetara-śobhinā

samprāpta-para-bhāgena śuśubhāte 'nurañjitau

TRANSLATION

Anointed with these most excellent cosmetics, which adorned Them with hues that contrasted with Their complexions, the two Lords appeared extremely beautiful.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma appeared splendid when Their complexions changed to match Their moods. Kṛṣṇa spread yellow ointment upon His body, and Balarāma blue ointment upon His. *Samprāpta-para-bhāgena* means the cosmetics exhibited the highest excellence. "By the logic of *bhūṣaṇa-bhūṣanāṇgam*, we can understand that actually Kṛṣṇa's ornaments are beautified by contacting His body, rather than the other way around."

|| 10.42.6 ||

prasanno bhagavān kubjāṁ trivakrāṁ rucirānanām

ṛjvīṁ kartuṁ manaś cakre darśayan darśane phalam

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa was pleased with Trivakrā, so He decided to straighten that hunchbacked girl with the lovely face just to demonstrate the result of seeing Him.

|| 10.42.7 ||

padbhyām ākramya prapade dry-aṅguly-uttāna-pāṇinā

pragṛhya cibuke 'dhyātmam udanīnamad acyutaḥ

TRANSLATION

Pressing down on her toes with both His feet, Lord Acyuta placed one upward-pointing finger of each hand under her chin and straightened up her body.

COMMENTARY

Pressing down on the front of Kubjā's feet with His two feet, Kṛṣṇa held her chin with two upward pointing fingers and pulled her body up.

|| 10.42.8 ||

sā tadarju-samānāṅgī bṛhac-chroṇi-payodharā

mukunda-sparśanāt sadyo babhūva pramadottamā

TRANSLATION

Simply by Lord Mukunda's touch, Trivakrā was suddenly transformed into an exquisitely beautiful woman with straight, evenly proportioned limbs and large hips and breasts.

COMMENTARY

Immediately Kubjā was transformed into a beautiful woman with straight, even limbs, large hips and full breasts. "By the touch of Mukunda" (*mukunda-sparśanāt*) indicates that this was the primary reason.

|| 10.42.9 ||

tato rūpa-guṇaudārya-sampannā prāha keśavam

uttarīyāntam akṛṣya smayantī jāta-hṛc-chayā

TRANSLATION

Now endowed with beauty, character and generosity Trivakrā began to feel lusty desires for Lord Keśava. Taking hold of the end of His upper cloth, she smiled and addressed Him as follows.

|| 10.42.10 ||

ehi vīra gṛhaṁ yāmo na tvāṁ tyaktum ihotsahe

tvayonmathita-cittāyāḥ prasīda puruṣarṣabha

TRANSLATION

[Trivakrā said:] Come, O hero, let us go to my house. I cannot bear to leave You here. O best of males, please take pity on me, since You have agitated my mind.

COMMENTARY

Kubjā said, “Others are heros in religiosity and other matters, but You are the hero in destroying the religiosity of women.”

Kṛṣṇa: Is it for the purpose of dining that you’re inviting Me to your house?

Kubjā: “No, that is not my intention. I cannot tolerate leaving You”.

Kṛṣṇa: “But people here on the King’s road will misconstrue what you’re saying and laugh. Therefore please don’t speak like this.”

Trivakrā: “I can’t help being agitated. You made the mistake of touching me. It’s not my fault.”

|| 10.42.11 ||

evaṁ striyā yācyamānaḥ kṛṣṇo rāmasya paśyataḥ

mukhaṁ vīkṣyānu gopānāṁ prahasaṁs tām uvāca ha

TRANSLATION

Thus entreated by the woman, Lord Kṛṣṇa first glanced at the face of Balarāma, who was watching the incident, and then at the faces of the cowherd boys. Then with a laugh Kṛṣṇa replied to her as follows.

COMMENTARY

Looking at Balarāma’s face (*mukhaṁ vīkṣyānu*) means that Kṛṣṇa said with His eyes, “Hey Douji! Why aren’t You and all the boys laughing? Can’t You see that this is not a woman but *hāsya-rasa* (laughter) personified, who knowing You to be in a funny mood has come to see You.” Or else Kṛṣṇa is saying, “This is the sum total of laughter within the city of Mathurā making itself known here.”

|| 10.42.12 ||

eṣyāmi te gṛhaṁ su-bhru puṁsām ādhi-vikarśanam

sādhitārtho 'gṛhāṇāṁ naḥ pānthānāṁ tvaṁ parāyaṇam

TRANSLATION

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] O lady with beautiful eyebrows, as soon as I fulfill My purpose I will certainly visit your house, where men can relieve their anxiety. Indeed, you are the best refuge for Us homeless travelers.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa then spoke, conveying to Kubjā that He was accepting her, and conveying to Balarāma and others that He was evading a worldly woman. Kṛṣṇa said, "O beautiful woman, by visiting your house all men can get relief from their anxieties." Kṛṣṇa spoke of all men to joke with her. "After doing My work of killing Kaṁsa, I will certainly come to your house." In this way Kṛṣṇa indicated the time that He would come. "You are the supreme shelter of Us (*naḥ*) unmarried men." Kṛṣṇa, though one person, used the plural (*naḥ*) to create respect for Himself as a prince in Kubjā's mind.

By saying "We are travelers" (*pānthānāṁ*) Kṛṣṇa implies, "In My village of Vṛndāvana there are many affectionate Vraja-gopīs who have deep love for Me. But I don't know any one in this Mathurā city. You are the only lady I have met who is attracted to Me." Thus Kṛṣṇa hints that He is attracted to Kubjā. By describing Kubjā as "one who relieves men of distress" (*ādhi-vikarśanam*), and by using the plural form of travelers (*pānthānām*), Kṛṣṇa deludes Balarāma and gopas, so that they will think He is insulting and putting off this ignorant lady, and not actually accepting Kubjā's advances.

|| 10.42.13 ||

visṛjya mādhvyā vāṇyā tām vrajan mārge vaṇik-pathaiḥ

nānopāyana-tāmbūla-srag-gandhaiḥ sāgrajo 'rcitaḥ

TRANSLATION

Leaving her with these sweet words, Lord Kṛṣṇa walked further down the road. The merchants along the way worshiped Him and His elder brother by presenting Them with various respectful offerings, including pān, garlands and fragrant substances.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa sent Kubjā away with sweet words (*mādhvyā vāṇyā*). The merchants along the road worshiped Kṛṣṇa with various articles.

|| 10.42.14 ||

tad-darśana-smara-kṣobhād ātmānaṁ nāvidan striyaḥ

visrasta-vāsaḥ-kavara valayā lekhya-mūrtayaḥ

TRANSLATION

The sight of Kṛṣṇa aroused Cupid in the hearts of the city women. Thus agitated, they forgot themselves. Their clothes, braids and bangles became disheveled, and they stood as still as figures in a painting.

COMMENTARY

The wives of the Mathurā merchants were the most advanced devotees in the city because they immediately experienced symptoms of conjugal attraction when they saw Kṛṣṇa, which usually develop after some time and association with the object of love. Theirs was “love at first sight.”

The ten effects of Cupid are described as follows: First comes attraction expressed through the eyes (*cakṣū-rāgaḥ prathamaṁ*), then intense attachment in the mind and heart (*cittāsaṅgas tato*), then determination (*saṅkalpaḥ*), loss of sleep (*nidrā-cchedas*), becoming emaciated (*tanutā*), disinterest in external things (*viṣaya-nivṛttis*), shamelessness (*trapā-nasaḥ*), madness (*unmādo*), becoming stunned (*mūrcchā*) and death (*mṛtir*). These are the ten stages of Cupid’s effects (*smara-daśā daśaiva syuḥ*).

Though these symptoms generally appear in stages, at this time they manifested all at once by seeing the gorgeous body of Kṛṣṇa. The phrase *ātmānaṁ nāvidan striyaḥ* means that the Mathurā ladies forgot who they were, where they were and what they were doing. Because of the impulse of Cupid they became thin, and thus the bangles and clothing slipped from their bodies. They were trembling, stretching their limbs, and finally rolling on the ground, which loosened their locks of hair. These are all signs of madness (*unmāda*), the eighth effect of Cupid. Standing like painted pictures indicates loss of consciousness, the ninth stage of Cupid’s effects. Because the tenth state of Cupid, death, is inauspicious in relation to Kṛṣṇa, it does not usually manifest in Kṛṣṇa’s *premi-bhaktas*. However, they do manifest the other nine symptoms, culminating in becoming stunned in ecstasy.

|| 10.42.15 ||

tataḥ paurān pṛcchamāno dhanuṣaḥ sthānam acyutaḥ

tasmin praviṣṭo dadṛśe dhanur aindram ivādbhutam

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa then asked the local people where the arena was in which the bow sacrifice would take place. When He went there He saw the amazing bow, which resembled Lord Indra's.

|| 10.42.16 ||

puruṣair bahubhir guptam arcitaṁ paramarddhimat

vāryamāṇo nṛbhiḥ kṛṣṇaḥ prasahya dhanur ādade

TRANSLATION

That most opulent bow was guarded by a large company of men, who were respectfully worshiping it. Kṛṣṇa pushed His way forward and, despite the guards' attempts to stop Him, picked it up.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa took the bow with great force (*prasahya*).

|| 10.42.17 ||

kareṇa vāmena sa-līlam uddhṛtaṁ sajyaṁ ca kṛtvā nimiṣeṇa paśyatām

nṛṇāṁ vikṛṣya prababhañja madhyato yathekṣu-daṇḍaṁ mada-kary urukramaḥ

TRANSLATION

Easily lifting the bow with His left hand, Lord Urukrama strung it in a fraction of a second as the King's guards looked on. He then powerfully pulled the string and snapped the bow in half, just as an excited elephant might break a stalk of sugar cane.

COMMENTARY

In front of the onlookers Kṛṣṇa playfully broke the bow, as if calling out to them, “O people, your king was worshiping this famous bow. But just by the touch of My hand it has broken, as if eaten away by termites.”

|| 10.42.18 ||

dhanuṣo bhajyamānasya śabdaḥ khaṁ rodasī diśaḥ

pūrayām āsa yaṁ śrutvā kaṁsas trāsam upāgamat

TRANSLATION

The sound of the bow’s breaking filled the earth and sky in all directions. Upon hearing it, Kaṁsa was struck with terror.

|| 10.42.19 ||

tad-rakṣiṇaḥ sānucaraṁ kupitā ātatāyinaḥ

gṛhītu-kāmā āvavrur gṛhyatāṁ vadhyatām iti

TRANSLATION

The enraged guards then took up their weapons and, wanting to seize Kṛṣṇa and His companions, surrounded them and shouted, “Grab Him! Kill Him!”

COMMENTARY

Wanting to catch Kṛṣṇa and His friends, the guards surrounded Him saying, “Kill Him! Kill Him!” However the same words can mean, “Men like us should be killed.”

|| 10.42.20 ||

atha tān durabhiprāyān vilokya bala-keśavau

kruddhau dhanvana ādāya śakale tāṁś ca jaghnatuḥ

TRANSLATION

Seeing the guards coming upon Them with evil intent, Balarāma and Keśava took up the two halves of the bow and began striking them down.

COMMENTARY

Taking the two broken pieces of the bow, Balarāma and Keśava killed the guards.

|| 10.42.21 ||

balaṁ ca kaṁsa-prahitaṁ hatvā śālā-mukhāt tataḥ

niṣkramya ceratur hṛṣṭau nirīkṣya pura-sampadaḥ

TRANSLATION

After also killing a contingent of soldiers sent by Kaṁsa, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma left the sacrificial arena by its main gate and continued Their walk about the city, happily looking at the opulent sights.

|| 10.42.22 ||

tayos tad adbhutaṁ vīryaṁ niśāmya pura-vāsinaḥ

tejaḥ prāgalbhyaṁ rūpaṁ ca menire vibudhottamau

TRANSLATION

Having witnessed the amazing deed Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma had performed, and seeing Their strength, boldness and beauty, the people of the city thought They must be two prominent demigods.

|| 10.42.23 ||

tayor vicaratoḥ svairam ādityo 'stam upeyivān

kṛṣṇa-rāmau vṛtau gopaiḥ purāc chakaṭam īyatuḥ

TRANSLATION

As They strolled about at will, the sun began to set, so They left the city with the cowherd boys and returned to the cowherds' wagon encampment.

COMMENTARY

Chakaṭam: śakaṭam is the place known as Sriakaṭāvamocana, on the outskirts of Mathurā, where Nanda Mahārāja was staying.

|| 10.42.24 ||

gopyo mukunda-vigame virahāturā yā

āśāsatāśiṣa ṛtā madhu-pury abhūvan

sampaśyatāṁ puruṣa-bhūṣaṇa-gātra-lakṣmīṁ
hitvetarān nu bhajataś cakame 'yanaṁ śrīḥ

TRANSLATION

At the time of Mukunda's [Kṛṣṇa's] departure from Vṛndāvana, the gopīs had foretold that the residents of Mathurā would enjoy many benedictions, and now the gopīs' predictions were coming true, for those residents were gazing upon the beauty of Kṛṣṇa, the jewel among men. Indeed, the goddess of fortune desired the shelter of that beauty so much that she abandoned many other men, although they worshiped her.

COMMENTARY

When Kṛṣṇa left Vraja for Mathurā, the *gopīs* predicted, "It will be an auspicious morning for the women of Mathurā, but a morning filled with sorrow for us. The blessings of their priests have born fruit, and the blessings of ours have failed. When Kṛṣṇa enters the city they will taste with their glances the sweetness of His moonlike face and His sweet smiles."

Śukadeva Gosvāmī, being of the same emotional state as the *gopīs*, was overcome with sorrow due to remembrance of their separation from Kṛṣṇa, so he reminded Parīkṣit of the *gopīs*' previous condition by describing it again in this verse. When Kṛṣṇa was leaving for Mathurā, the *gopīs* gave the following blessing: "Today the women of Mathurā will enjoy the highest happiness that we should enjoy. Now that has come true, as the women of Mathurā gaze at Kṛṣṇa's gorgeous body." "How could this not come true?"

The word *srīḥ* refers to all the beauty in the three worlds, and to the presiding deity of all beauty. Desiring the shelter of the beauty of those limbs in order to make herself more beautiful, since Kṛṣṇa's limbs are the ornament of all ornaments (*bhūsaṇa-bhūṣanāṇgam*), the goddess of all beauty of the three worlds gave up all other men, although they worshiped her. The incredible beauty of Kṛṣṇa's body is characterized by the word *ayanaṁ*, which means the shelter of all beauty, both mundane and transcendental.

|| 10.42.25 ||

avaniktāṅghri-yugalau bhuktvā kṣīropasecanam

ūṣatus tāṁ sukhaṁ rātriṁ jñātvā kaṁsa-cikīrṣitam

TRANSLATION

After Kṛṣṇa's and Balarāma's feet were bathed, the two Lords ate rice with milk. Then, although knowing what Kaṁsa intended to do, They spent the night there comfortably.

COMMENTARY

After having Their feet washed by some servants, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma ate rice sprinkled with milk. The milk came from some of Kṛṣṇa's favorite cows in Vraja with one-year old calves, which mother Yaśodā had placed on top of the wagon in a pot meant for the sacrificial fire. Because They were fearless, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma slept soundly, though knowing that the next day Kaṁsa wanted to kill Them. Due to being fast asleep, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma did not hear the words of Their father, Nanda Mahārāja, who could not sleep the entire night due to fear.

Nanda Mahārāja said, "O my children what have You foolishly done today? Why did You break the bow they were worshiping and then kill the guards? I do not know what angry Kaṁsa will do tomorrow. Alas, alas, why have I brought these two young boys here from the cowherd village?"

|| 10.42.26-27 ||

kaṁsas tu dhanuṣo bhaṅgaṁ rakṣiṇāṁ sva-balasya ca

vadhaṁ niśamya govinda-rāma-vikrīḍitaṁ param

dīrgha-prajāgaro bhīto durnimittāni durmatiḥ

bahūny acaṣṭobhayathā mṛtyor dautya-karāṇi ca

TRANSLATION

Wicked King Kaṁsa, on the other hand, was terrified, having heard how Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma had broken the bow and killed his guards and soldiers, all simply as a game. He remained awake for a long time, and both while awake and while dreaming he saw many bad omens, messengers of death.

COMMENTARY

After hearing that the killing of his guards and troops was merely the sport of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma and not any display of prowess, Kaṁsa saw many signs like messengers of his impending death both while waking and sleeping.

|| 10.42.28-31 ||

adarśanaṁ sva-śirasaḥ pratirūpe ca saty api

asaty api dvitīye ca dvai-rūpyaṁ jyotiṣāṁ tathā

chidra-pratītiś chāyāyāṁ prāṇa-ghoṣānupaśrutiḥ

svarṇa-pratītir vṛkṣeṣu sva-padānām adarśanam

svapne preta-pariṣvaṅgaḥ khara-yānaṁ viṣādanam

yāyān nalada-māly ekas tailābhyakto dig-ambaraḥ

anyāni cetthaṁ-bhūtāni svapna-jāgaritāni ca

paśyan maraṇa-santrasto nidrāṁ lebhe na cintayā

TRANSLATION

When he looked at his reflection he could not see his head; for no reason the moon and stars appeared double; he saw a hole in his shadow; he could not hear the sound of his life air; trees seemed covered with a golden hue; and he could not see his footprints. He dreamt that he was being embraced by ghosts, riding a donkey and drinking poison, and also that a naked man smeared with oil was

passing by wearing a garland of nalada flowers. Seeing these and other such omens both while dreaming and while awake, Kaṁsa was terrified by the prospect of death, and out of anxiety he could not sleep.

COMMENTARY

The inauspicious omens are explained in three verses. Though Kaṁsa saw his reflection in the mirror, the reflection was headless. The moon and other planets appeared double for no apparent reason. There were holes in his shadow. He could not hear his heart beat (*prāna-ghoṣā*) when covering his ears with his palms, nor see his footprints in the dust or mud. Trees appeared golden in color. These omens were perceived in Kaṁsa's waking state.

Kaṁsa saw these omens in his dreams: ghosts embracing him, riding a donkey, drinking poison and a naked man covered in oil passing by wearing a garland of *Java* flowers. In this way Kaṁsa saw many astonishing things both in waking and sleeping states.

|| 10.42.32 ||

vyuṣṭāyāṁ niśi kauravya sūrye cādbhyaḥ samutthite

kārayām āsa vai kaṁso malla-krīḍā-mahotsavam

TRANSLATION

When the night had finally passed and the sun rose up again from the water, Kaṁsa set about arranging for the grand wrestling festival.

COMMENTARY

"When the night broke and the sun rose from the water" refers to a Vedic verse: *ya udagān mahato 'rṇavād, vibhrajamānaḥ salilasya madhyāt, samā vṛṣabho lohitākṣaḥ, sūryo vipaścin manasā punātu*, "May the red-eyed, most excellent, omniscient sun, rising up from the great ocean, purify the universe."

|| 10.42.33 ||

ānarcuḥ puruṣā raṅgaṁ tūrya-bheryaś ca jaghnire

mañcāś cālaṅkṛtāḥ sragbhiḥ patākā-caila-toraṇaiḥ

TRANSLATION

The King's men performed the ritual worship of the wrestling arena, sounded their drums and other instruments and decorated the viewing galleries with garlands, flags, ribbons and arches.

COMMENTARY

Kaṁsa's servants (*puruṣā*) decorated the arena with auspicious pots and other things. They began to beat the drums with sticks.

|| 10.42.34 ||

teṣu paurā jānapadā brahma-kṣatra-purogamāḥ

yathopajoṣaṁ viviśū rājānaś ca kṛtāsanāḥ

TRANSLATION

The city-dwellers and residents of the outlying districts, led by brāhmaṇas and kṣatriyas, came and sat down comfortably in the galleries. The royal guests received special seats.

COMMENTARY

The guests sat down comfortably (*yathā-upajoṣam*).

|| 10.42.35 ||

kaṁsaḥ parivṛto 'mātyai rāja-mañca upāviśat

maṇḍaleśvara-madhya-stho hṛdayena vidūyatā

TRANSLATION

Surrounded by his ministers, Kaṁsa took his seat on the imperial dais. But even as he sat amidst his various provincial rulers, his heart trembled.

COMMENTARY

When Kaṁsa sat down his heart trembled (*vidūyatā*).

|| 10.42.36 ||

vādyamānesu tūryeṣu malla-tālottareṣu ca

mallāḥ sv-alaṅkṛtāḥ dṛptāḥ sopādhyāyāḥ samāsata

TRANSLATION

While the musical instruments loudly played in the rhythmic meters appropriate for wrestling matches, the lavishly ornamented wrestlers proudly entered the arena with their coaches and sat down.

COMMENTARY

The instruments played music in rhythms suitable for a wrestling match.

|| 10.42.37 ||

cāṇūro muṣṭikaḥ kūtaḥ śalas tośala eva ca

ta āsedur upasthānaṁ valgu-vādya-praharṣitāḥ

TRANSLATION

Enthused by the pleasing music, Cāṇūra, Muṣṭika, Kūṭa, Śala and Tośala sat down on the wrestling mat.

COMMENTARY

The wrestlers sat down on the mat in the wrestling ring (*upasthānam*).

|| 10.42.38 ||

nanda-gopādayo gopā bhoja-rāja-samāhutāḥ

niveditopāyanās ta ekasmin mañca āviśan

TRANSLATION

Nanda Mahārāja and the other cowherds, summoned by the King of the Bhojas, presented him with their offerings and then took their seats in one of the galleries.

COMMENTARY

The word *samāhutāḥ* indicates that King Kaṁsa respectfully called Nanda Mahārāja and the leaders of Vraja forward so that they could make their offerings to the central government.

Kaṁsa assured Nanda as follows: “My dear King of Vraja, you are the most important of my village rulers. Yet even though you have come to Mathurā from your cowherd village, you have not come to visit me. Is that because you are frightened? Don’t think that your two sons are bad because They broke the bow. I invited Them here because I heard They were extremely powerful, and I’ve arranged this wrestling match as a test of Their strength. Please come forward without hesitation. Don’t be afraid.”

Nanda Mahārāja noticed his two sons were not present. Apparently, out of disrespect for King Kaṁsa’s order, They had taken the morning off and gone elsewhere. Thus Kaṁsa delegated some cowherd men, who were affectionate close relatives, to go look for Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma and advise Them to behave properly and come back to the wrestling arena. Upananda and others quickly came forward and offered yogurt, ghee, cloth and gold coins to King Kaṁsa. Not seeing any space on the platform of the king, Nanda and the other cowherd men sat in the galleries.

Thus ends the commentary on the Forty Second Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Forty-three

Kṛṣṇa Kills the Elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa

|| 10.43.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

atha kṛṣṇaś ca rāmaś ca kṛta-śaucau parantapa

malla-dundubhi-nirghoṣaṁ śrutvā draṣṭum upeyatuḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O chastiser of enemies, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, having executed all necessary purification, then heard the kettledrums resounding at the wrestling arena, and They went there to see what was happening.

COMMENTARY

This chapter describes Kṛṣṇa's killing of the king of elephants; His causing a downpour of sweetness and opulence when He entered the wrestling arena; and His discussion with the wrestler Cāṇūra.

Atha (next) signifies that early in the morning Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, without telling their father and elders, went to the bank of the Yamunā with Their friends. Before washing Their faces and hands they said, "O friends! Listen to the drums announcing the wrestling match. Let us now leave here and go to the arena." Then everyone quickly went to see the wrestling match.

|| 10.43.2 ||

raṅga-dvāraṁ samāsādya tasmin nāgam avasthitam

apaśyat kuvalayāpīḍaṁ kṛṣṇo 'mbaṣṭha-pracoditam

TRANSLATION

When Lord Kṛṣṇa reached the entrance to the arena, He saw the elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa blocking His way at the urging of his keeper.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa saw the elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa, being instigated by his trainer.

|| 10.43.3 ||

baddhvā parikaraṁ śauriḥ samuhya kuṭilālakān

uvāca hastipaṁ vācā megha-nāda-gabhīrayā

TRANSLATION

Securely binding up His clothes and tying back His curly locks, Lord Kṛṣṇa addressed the elephant-keeper with words as grave as the rumbling of a cloud.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa took off His shirt, tightened His belt, and placed the garlands and other dangling objects over His shoulder. He tucked His curly locks under His turban with His fingers. But fearing that they would become loose at the time of combat, Kṛṣṇa tied back His hair with His upper cloth.

|| 10.43.4 ||

ambaṣṭhāmbaṣṭha mārgaṁ nau dehy apakrama mā ciram

no cet sa-kuñjaraṁ tvādya nayāmi yama-sādanam

TRANSLATION

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] O driver, driver, move aside at once and let Us pass! If you don’t, this very day I will send both you and your elephant to the abode of Yamarāja!

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “I will send you to the abode of Yama (*yama sādanam*)” The phrase *yama sādanam* also indicates liberation because it is attained (*sādyate:prāpyate*) by *yama* (control of the mind).

|| 10.43.5 ||

evaṁ nirbhartsito ’mbaṣṭhaḥ kupitaḥ kopitaṁ gajam

codayām āsa kṛṣṇāya kālāntaka-yamopamam

TRANSLATION

Thus threatened, the elephant-keeper became angry. He goaded his furious elephant, who appeared equal to time, death and Yamarāja, into attacking Lord Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

He instigated the elephant to catch Kṛṣṇa. The elephant is described as being like Yamarāja, who brings an end to one’s life through the force of time (*kālāntaka*). However Kṛṣṇa is the master of time, which is stronger than the elephant. Thus the elephant and his trainer could do no harm to Kṛṣṇa. By using this phrase, *kālāntaka-yamopamam* “comparable to time, death and Yamarāja” Śukadeva was comforting fearful Parīkṣit.

|| 10.43.6 ||

karīndras tam abhidrutya kareṇa tarasāgrahīt

karād vigalitaḥ so ’muṁ nihatyāṅghriṣv alīyata

TRANSLATION

The lord of the elephants charged Kṛṣṇa and violently seized Him with his trunk. But Kṛṣṇa slipped away, struck him a blow and disappeared from his view among his legs.

COMMENTARY

Using its trunk the elephant seized the waist of Kṛṣṇa, who was standing there fearlessly. Kṛṣṇa struck the elephant on his trunk with His left fist. As the elephant lost control from that punch, Kṛṣṇa slipped out from his grasp and disappeared between his four legs, which were as big as pillars.

The word *aṅghriṣu* (among his legs) can be explained as follows: First Kṛṣṇa hid behind one leg, and when the elephant used his sense of smell to detect Him, Kṛṣṇa would hide behind another leg. In this way playful Kṛṣṇa cheated the elephant in many ways and showed the public His remarkable daring.

|| 10.43.7 ||

saṅkruddhas tam acakṣāṇo ghrāṇa-dṛṣṭiḥ sa keśavam

parāmṛśat puṣkareṇa sa prasahya vinirgataḥ

TRANSLATION

Infuriated at being unable to see Lord Keśava, the elephant sought Him out with his sense of smell. Once again Kuvalayāpīḍa seized the Lord with the end of his trunk, only to have the Lord forcefully free Himself.

COMMENTARY

Not being able to see Kṛṣṇa, the elephant detected Him with his sense of smell and seized Kṛṣṇa with his trunk once again. With a desire to display His feats to the public and to encourage the beast to keep fighting, Kṛṣṇa allowed Himself to be seized by the elephant's trunk. When the elephant thought he was successful, Kṛṣṇa forcefully freed Himself saying, "So, you want to show your strength?"

|| 10.43.8 ||

pucche pragṛhyāti-balaṁ dhanuṣaḥ pañca-viṁśatim

vicakarṣa yathā nāgaṁ suparṇa iva līlayā

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa then grabbed the powerful Kuvalayāpīḍa by the tail and playfully dragged him twenty-five bow-lengths as easily as Garuḍa might drag a snake.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa dragged the elephant twenty-five bow lengths [125 feet] or one hundred hand widths distant by his tail. The elephant could not stop this.

|| 10.43.9 ||

sa paryāvartamānena savya-dakṣiṇato 'cyutaḥ

babhrāma bhrāmyamāṇena go-vatseneva bālakaḥ

TRANSLATION

As Lord Acyuta held on to the elephant's tail, the animal tried to twist away to the left and to the right, making the Lord swerve in the opposite direction, as a young boy would swerve when pulling a calf by the tail.

COMMENTARY

In order to encourage the elephant to fight, Kṛṣṇa slightly slackened the force of His pulling. When the elephant regained strength he would turn to the left in order to catch Kṛṣṇa, who was holding his tail. Kṛṣṇa would then move to the right. When the elephant would turn to the right, then Kṛṣṇa would go the left, just as a strong boy is moved about while clutching the tail of a calf.

|| 10.43.10 ||

tato 'bhimakham abhyetya pāṇināhatya vāraṇam

prādravan pātayām āsa spṛśyamānaḥ pade pade

TRANSLATION

Kṛṣṇa then came face to face with the elephant and slapped him and ran away. Kuvalayāpīḍa pursued the Lord, managing to touch Him again and again with each step, but Kṛṣṇa outmaneuvered the elephant and made him trip and fall.

COMMENTARY

In order to play in a different way, Kṛṣṇa let go of the elephant's tail. Kṛṣṇa then struck the elephant lightly with His hand. If Kṛṣṇa had given him a proper blow it would have killed him immediately and ended the game. After striking the elephant Kṛṣṇa quickly ran away without any effort, but then reduced His speed to encourage the elephant. When the elephant began to touch Him, Kṛṣṇa stumbled as if tired of running to make the elephant fall on the ground.

|| 10.43.11 ||

sa dhāvan kṛīdayā bhūmau patitvā sahasotthitaḥ

tam matvā patitaṁ kruddho dantābhyāṁ so 'hanat kṣitim

TRANSLATION

As Kṛṣṇa dodged about, He playfully fell on the ground and quickly got up again. The raging elephant, thinking Kṛṣṇa was down, tried to gore Him with his tusks but struck the earth instead.

COMMENTARY

To make the elephant forcefully strike the hard stone on the ground, Kṛṣṇa pretended to fall on the ground and slowly rise up. Seeing Kṛṣṇa on the ground, the elephant became determined to kill Him. The elephant fell on his knees and dug the earth with his tusks. At the very fraction of a moment the elephant was hurling his tusks, Kṛṣṇa got up and ran to another spot.

|| 10.43.12 ||

sva-vikrame pratihate kuñjarendro 'ty-amarṣitaḥ

codyamāno mahāmātraiḥ kṛṣṇam abhyadravad ruṣā

TRANSLATION

His prowess foiled, the lordly elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa went into a frenzied rage out of frustration. But the elephant-keepers goaded him on, and he furiously charged Kṛṣṇa once again.

|| 10.43.13 ||

tam āpatantam āsādya bhagavān madhusūdanaḥ

nigṛhya pāṇinā hastaṁ pātayām āsa bhū-tale

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord, killer of the demon Madhu, confronted the elephant as he attacked. Seizing his trunk with one hand, Kṛṣṇa threw him to the ground.

COMMENTARY

Noticing that time was passing, Kṛṣṇa concluded His sporting with Kuvalayāpīḍa. Kṛṣṇa nonchalantly caught the elephant's trunk with His left hand.

|| 10.43.14 ||

patitasya padākramya mṛgendra iva līlayā

dantam utpāṭya tenebhaṁ hastipāṁś cāhanad dhariḥ

TRANSLATION

Lord Hari then climbed onto the elephant with the ease of a mighty lion, pulled out a tusk, and with it killed the beast and his keepers.

|| 10.43.15 ||

mṛtakaṁ dvipam utsṛjya danta-pāṇiḥ samāviśat

aṁsa-nyasta-viṣāṇo 'sṛṅ-mada-bindubhir aṅkitaḥ

virūḍha-sveda-kaṇikā vadanāmburuho babhau

TRANSLATION

Leaving the dead elephant aside, Lord Kṛṣṇa held on to the tusk and entered the wrestling arena. With the tusk resting on His shoulder, drops of the elephant's blood and sweat sprinkled all over Him, and His lotus face covered with fine drops of His own perspiration, the Lord shone with great beauty.

COMMENTARY

With the elephant's tusk perched on His shoulder (*aṁsa-nyasta-viṣāṇo*), fine particles of perspiration like drops of dew on His lotus face, and the drops of blood and ichor from

the elephant, Kṛṣṇa's body glistened with beauty and appeared as the epitome of *vīra-rasa* (chivalry or heroism).

|| 10.43.16 ||

vṛtau gopaiḥ katipayair baladeva-janārdanau

raṅgaṁ viviśatū rājan gaja-danta-varāyudhau

TRANSLATION

My dear King, Lord Baladeva and Lord Janārdana, each carrying one of the elephant's tusks as His chosen weapon, entered the arena with several cowherd boys.

|| 10.43.17 ||

mallānām aśanir nṛṇāṁ nara-varaḥ strīṇāṁ smaro mūrtimān

gopānāṁ sva-jano 'satāṁ kṣiti-bhujāṁ śāstā sva-pitroḥ śiśuḥ

mṛtyur bhoja-pater virāḍ aviduṣāṁ tattvaṁ paraṁ yoginām

vṛṣṇīnāṁ para-devateti vidito raṅgaṁ gataḥ sāgrajaḥ

TRANSLATION

The various groups of people in the arena regarded Kṛṣṇa in different ways when He entered it with His elder brother. The wrestlers saw Kṛṣṇa as a lightning bolt, the men of Mathurā as the best of males, the women as Cupid in person, the cowherd men as their relative, the impious rulers as a chastiser, His parents as their child, the King of the Bhojas as death, the unintelligent as the Supreme Lord's universal form, the yogīs as the Absolute Truth and the Vṛṣṇis as their supreme worshipable Deity.

COMMENTARY

This verse shows that Kṛṣṇa is the personified essential purport of all the *Upaniṣads*. Kṛṣṇa, who is declared in the Śruti to be the great original form of all *rasa* (*mahā-rasa-svarūpa*), manifested Himself within the wrestling arena to the different types of people present in accordance with their particular mentalities.

In front of the wrestlers like Cāṇūra, who had bodies as big as mountains, Kṛṣṇa was like a thunderbolt. Though Kṛṣṇa has tender, cool and gentle limbs, He appeared to the envious wrestlers to be extremely hard like a mountain with harsh, pain inflicting limbs. Though sugar candy is sweet, it tastes bitter to one with jaundice. Though Kṛṣṇa's form was seen by the wrestlers and other similarly inclined spectators, they did not taste the real form (*rasa-svarūpa*) of the Lord, but rather experienced *rasābhāsa* in their hearts.

For the men of Mathurā, who were non-envious from their very birth, and endowed with a generalized mood of pure love, Kṛṣṇa appeared as the best of men, possessing the most excellent qualities, and performing the most amazing and extraordinary pastimes. Because the minds of these men were situated in pure goodness they appreciated Kṛṣṇa's true identity as the best of males, and thus they relished the mellow of astonishment (*viṣmaya-rasa*).

The young women of Mathurā, who were without any trace of material lust and full of *prema*, appreciated Kṛṣṇa's true identity as the original Cupid. Therefore, within their hearts Kṛṣṇa manifested the mood of conjugal affection (*ujjvala-rasa*). By the use of the word *mūrtimān* (incarnation or embodiment) as a modifying adjective for *smaraḥ* (Cupid), it indicates that all other realizations are limbs or expansions of this particular *svarūpa* (Kṛṣṇa's form as the transcendental Cupid, Kāmadeva).

The cowherd boys appreciated Kṛṣṇa's true identity (*svarūpa*) as their intimate friend. Thus among them He manifested the moods of friendship (*sakhya-rasa*) and the mellow of humor (*hāsya-rasa*). The impious kings, who were burdening the earth and offending the Lord's devotees, saw Kṛṣṇa as their destroyer. But since being the destroyer is not the *svarūpa* of Kṛṣṇa, who is the well-wisher of all and the reservoir of unlimited pleasure, persons like the wrestlers could not appreciate Kṛṣṇa's true identity. Among them Kṛṣṇa manifested (*rasābhāsa*) in the mood of anger (*raudra-rasa*).

For His parents, Nanda and Vasudeva, or else Vasudeva and Devakī, Kṛṣṇa appeared as a baby, indicating that they appreciated His *svarūpa*, since being the son of Nanda and Vasudeva are both His true identity. Thus they experienced the mood of parental love (*vātsalya-rasa*) and also the mood of compassion (*karuṇa-rasa*) because they saw that there were persons present who wanted to hurt Kṛṣṇa.

Kaṁsa, the King of the Bhojas, saw Kṛṣṇa as death. Kṛṣṇa, who is a stream of sweet, intoxicating nectar, does not have a *svarūpa* of death. Thus Kaṁsa did not really taste Kṛṣṇa. but simply got a dim reflection of transcendental taste (*abhāsa*) in the mood of fright (*bhayānaka-rasa*).

To Kaṁsa's ignorant priests and other offenders Kṛṣṇa appeared as an ordinary mundane person. Such bewildered persons said, "Just see! What sort of Supreme Lord is this that steals other's wives and slaughters cows and other innocent creatures? Indeed,

even now His limbs are contaminated with the bones and blood of some living being, which is wicked even for ordinary men. Thus Kṛṣṇa is most repulsive to look at." Since such extremely sinful blasphemers, who were unintelligent and more fallen than demons like Kaṁsa, had no attraction for Kṛṣṇa, their mood was a *rasābhāsa* of ghastliness (*vībhatsa-rasa*).

For the *yogīs*, such as Sanaka, Kṛṣṇa was the Supreme Truth in person, the Paraṁbrahma. which means that they did not appreciate Kṛṣṇa's true identity. In them, Kṛṣṇa manifested the mellow of neutrality (*sānta-rasa*). The members of the *Vṛṣṇi* dynasty saw Kṛṣṇa as their most worshipable Supreme Lord. They tasted His *svarūpa* in the mood of servitude (*dāsya-rasa*).

Among the ten types of people described in the arena, four, being inimical to Kṛṣṇa, were unable to appreciate the transcendental moods of relationship with Him and thus could not taste the real *rasa* of Kṛṣṇa, who is the source of all *rasa*. The other six classes of persons relished eight *rasas*. The *Upaniṣads* say, *raso vai saḥ rasaḥ hy āyaṁ labdhvānandī bhavati*: "The Supreme Lord is the very form of *rasa*. Having tasted that *rasa* or most astonishing bliss, the living entity becomes completely blissful." It is confirmed here in the Tenth Canto's description of Kaṁsa's wrestling match that Kṛṣṇa is that *rasa* (*raso vai saḥ*). The above statement on *rasa* from the Upaniṣads means that though a person may be blissful, if he attains Kṛṣṇa (*tam labdhva*), who is *rasa* personified, he then becomes completely full of bliss (*ānanda-bhavati*).

|| 10.43.18 ||

hataṁ kuvalayāpīḍaṁ dṛṣṭvā tāv api durjayau

kaṁso manasy api tadā bhṛśam udvivije nṛpa

TRANSLATION

When Kaṁsa saw that Kuvalayāpīḍa was dead and the two brothers were invincible, he was overwhelmed with anxiety, O King.

COMMENTARY

Manasy api means "even though Kaṁsa was a great hero." Or else, before Kaṁsa was disturbed with anxiety, and now he became completely overtaken by anxiety.

|| 10.43.19 ||

tau rejatū raṅga-gatau mahā-bhujau vicitra-veṣābharaṇa-srag-ambarau

yathā naṭāv uttama-veṣa-dhāriṇau manaḥ kṣipantau prabhayā nirīkṣatām

TRANSLATION

Arrayed with variegated ornaments, garlands and garments, just like a pair of excellently costumed actors, the two mighty-armed Lords shone splendidly in the arena. Indeed, They overpowered the minds of all onlookers with Their effulgences.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma touched (*kṣipantau:spṛṣantau*) the minds of those who were looking at Them.

|| 10.43.20 ||

nirīkṣya tāv uttama-pūruṣau janā mañca-sthitā nāgara-rāṣṭrakā nṛpa

praharṣa-vegotkalitekṣaṇānanāḥ papur na tṛptā nayanais tad-ānanam

TRANSLATION

O King, as the citizens of the city and the people from outlying districts gazed upon those two Supreme Personalities from their seats in the galleries, the force of the people's happiness caused their eyes to open wide and their faces to blossom. They drank in the vision of the Lords' faces without becoming satiated.

COMMENTARY

The eyes of the people in the galleries opened like lotuses blossoming at sunrise, to drink the sweetness of the faces of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma.

|| 10.43.21-22 ||

pibanta iva cakṣurbhyāṁ lihanta iva jihvayā

jighranta iva nāsābhyāṁ śliṣyanta iva bāhubhiḥ

ūcuḥ parasparaṁ te vai yathā-dṛṣṭaṁ yathā-śrutam

tad-rūpa-guṇa-mādhurya-prāgalbhya-smāritā iva

TRANSLATION

The people seemed to be drinking Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma with their eyes, licking Them with their tongues, smelling Them with their nostrils and embracing Them with their arms. Reminded of the Lords' beauty, character, charm and bravery, the members of the audience began describing these features to one another according to what they had seen and heard.

COMMENTARY

This verse describes how the Mathurā-vāsīs relished the beauty of Kṛṣṇa. With wide open eyes they looked, with thirsty tongues they tasted, with flared nostrils they smelled, and with open arms they embraced Śrī Kṛṣṇa. They began to speak about what they had seen (breaking the bow) and heard (lifting Govardhana Hill), but not in any chronological order. Kṛṣṇa's body was very attractive with His bluish-black color mixed with red blood and the elephant tusk in His hand. They remembered Kṛṣṇa's qualities of heroism, the varieties of His sweetness such as His laughter and sidelong glances, and His boldness in breaking the bow without hesitation. Having seen or heard these things, they tried to remember them (*smāritāḥ iva*), though they were not qualified, and to talk about them.

|| 10.43.23 ||

etau bhagavataḥ sākṣād dharer nārāyaṇasya hi

avatīrṇāv ihāṁśena vasudevasya veśmani

TRANSLATION

[The people said:] These two boys are certainly expansions of the Supreme Lord Nārāyaṇa who have descended to this world in the home of Vasudeva.

COMMENTARY

For the audience, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma appeared to be plenary expansions (*āṁśena*) of Nārāyaṇa.

|| 10.43.24 ||

eṣa vai kila devakyāṁ jāto nītaś ca gokulam

kālam etaṁ vasan gūḍho vavṛdhe nanda-veśmani

TRANSLATION

This one [Kṛṣṇa] took birth from mother Devakī and was brought to Gokula, where He has remained concealed all this time, growing up in the house of King Nanda.

|| 10.43.25 ||

pūtanānena nītāntaṁ cakravātaś ca dānavaḥ

arjunau guhyakaḥ keśī dhenuko 'nye ca tad-vidhāḥ

TRANSLATION

He made Pūtanā and the whirlwind demon meet with death, pulled down the twin Arjuna trees and killed Śaṅkhacūḍa, Keśī, Dhenuka and similar demons.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa killed many demons such as Śaṅkhacūḍa (*guhyaka*).

|| 10.43.26-27 ||

gāvaḥ sa-pālā etena dāvāgneḥ parimocitāḥ

kāliyo damitaḥ sarpa indraś ca vimadaḥ kṛtaḥ

saptāham eka-hastena dhṛto 'dri-pravaro 'munā

varṣa-vātāśanibhyaś ca paritrātaṁ ca gokulam

TRANSLATION

He saved the cows and the cowherds from a forest fire and subdued the serpent Kāliya. He removed Lord Indra's false pride by holding up the best of mountains with one hand for an entire week, thus protecting the inhabitants of Gokula from rain, wind and hail.

|| 10.43.28 ||

gopyo ’sya nitya-mudita-hasita-prekṣaṇaṁ mukham

paśyantyo vividhāṁs tāpāṁs taranti smāśramaṁ mudā

TRANSLATION

The gopīs overcame all kinds of distress and experienced great happiness by seeing His face, which is always cheerful with smiling glances and ever free of fatigue.

COMMENTARY

Because of seeing Kṛṣṇa’s face, the *gopīs* were easily able to surpass the obstacles and scolding of their husbands, mothers-in-law and other relatives.

|| 10.43.29 ||

vadanty anena vaṁśo ’yaṁ yadoḥ su-bahu-viśrutaḥ

śriyaṁ yaśo mahatvaṁ ca lapsyate parirakṣitaḥ

TRANSLATION

It is said that under His full protection the Yadu dynasty will become extremely famous and attain wealth, glory and power.

COMMENTARY

The learned have said that the Yadu family, being protected by Kṛṣṇa, will attain great power and wealth.

|| 10.43.30 ||

ayaṁ cāsyāgrajaḥ śrīmān rāmaḥ kamala-locanaḥ

pralambo nihato yena vatsako ye bakādayaḥ

TRANSLATION

This lotus-eyed elder brother of His, Lord Balarāma, is the proprietor of all transcendental opulences. He has killed Pralamba, Vatsaka, Baka and other demons.

COMMENTARY

First Kṛṣṇa killed Vatsasura and then Bakāsura. Later Balarāma vanquished Pralambāsura. However, the Mathurā-vāsīs speaking this verse give the wrong sequence and credit Balarāma as the annihilator of all these demons. The reason for the mistake is that as news of Kṛṣṇa's exploits spread among ordinary people, the facts became somewhat muddled.

|| 10.43.31 ||

janeṣv evaṁ bruvāṇeṣu tūryeṣu ninadatsu ca

kṛṣṇa-rāmau samābhāṣya cāṇūro vākyam abravīt

TRANSLATION

While the people talked in this way and the musical instruments resounded, the wrestler Cāṇūra addressed Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma with the following words.

|| 10.43.32 ||

he nanda-sūno he rāma bhavantau vīra-sammatau

niyuddha-kuśalau śrutvā rājñāhūtau didṛkṣuṇā

TRANSLATION

[Cāṇūra said:] O son of Nanda, O Rāma, You two are well respected by courageous men and are both skillful at wrestling. Having heard of Your prowess, the King has called You here, wanting to see for himself.

COMMENTARY

You are skillful in arm-to-arm wrestling (*niyuddha*).

|| 10.43.33 ||

priyaṁ rājñaḥ prakurvatyaḥ śreyo vindanti vai prajāḥ

manasā karmaṇā vācā viparītam ato 'nyathā

TRANSLATION

Subjects of the King who try to please him with their thoughts, acts and words are sure to achieve good fortune, but those who fail to do so will suffer the opposite fate.

|| 10.43.34 ||

nityaṁ pramuditā gopā vatsa-pālā yathā-sphuṭam

vaneṣu malla-yuddhena krīḍantaś cārayanti gāḥ

TRANSLATION

It is well known that cowherd boys are always joyful as they tend their calves, and that the boys playfully wrestle with each other while grazing their animals in the various forests.

COMMENTARY

Here Cāṇūra explains how Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma became expert at wrestling.

|| 10.43.35 ||

tasmād rājñaḥ priyaṁ yūyaṁ vayaṁ ca karavāma he

bhūtāni naḥ prasīdanti sarva-bhūta-mayo nṛpaḥ

TRANSLATION

Therefore let's do what the King wants. Everyone will be pleased with us, for the king embodies all living beings.

|| 10.43.36 ||

tan niśamyābravīt kṛṣṇo deśa-kālocitaṁ vacaḥ

niyuddham ātmano ’bhīṣṭaṁ manyamāno ’bhinandya ca

TRANSLATION

Hearing this, Lord Kṛṣṇa, who liked to wrestle and welcomed the challenge, replied with words appropriate to the time and place.

|| 10.43.37 ||

prajā bhoja-pater asya vayaṁ cāpi vane-carāḥ

karavāma priyaṁ nityaṁ tan naḥ param anugrahaḥ

TRANSLATION

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] Although forest-dwellers, We are also subjects of the Bhoja king. We must gratify his desires, for such behavior will confer upon Us the greatest benefit.

|| 10.43.38 ||

bālā vayaṁ tulya-balaiḥ krīḍiṣyāmo yathocitam

bhaven niyuddhaṁ mādharmaḥ spṛśen malla-sabhā-sadaḥ

TRANSLATION

We are just young boys and should play with those of equal strength. The wrestling match must go on properly so that irreligion does not taint the respectable members of the audience.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “We should fight with boys Our own age so that no irreligion will touch the organizers of the match. Any other arrangement would be unfair.”

|| 10.43.39 ||

cāṇūra uvāca

na bālo na kiśoras tvaṁ balaś ca balināṁ varaḥ

līlayebho hato yena sahasra-dvipa-sattva-bhṛt

TRANSLATION

Cāṇūra said: You aren't really a child or even a young man, and neither is Balarāma, the strongest of the strong. After all, You playfully killed an elephant who had the strength of a thousand other elephants.

|| 10.43.40 ||

tasmād bhavadbhyāṁ balibhir yoddhavyaṁ nānayo 'tra vai

mayi vikrama vārṣṇeya balena saha muṣṭikaḥ

TRANSLATION

Therefore You two should fight powerful wrestlers. There's certainly nothing unfair about that. You, O descendant of Vṛṣṇi, can show Your prowess against me, and Balarāma can fight with Muṣṭika.

COMMENTARY

Cāṇūra said, "You should fight with wrestlers who are strong like me, not with boys who do not match Your strength."

Thus ends the commentary on the Forty Third Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Forty-four

The Killing of Kaṁsa

|| 10.44.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

evaṁ carcita-saṅkalpo bhagavān madhusūdanaḥ

āsasādātha caṇūraṁ muṣṭikaṁ rohiṇī-sutaḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus addressed, Lord Kṛṣṇa made up His mind to accept the challenge. He paired off with Cāṇūra, and Lord Balarāma with Muṣṭika.

COMMENTARY

This chapter describes the killing of Kaṁsa and the wrestlers, the consolation of the Kaṁsa's wives, and Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma's meeting with Their parents. Thinking with determination (*carcita-saṅkalpo*), "I will kill Cāṇūra," Kṛṣṇa approached him.

|| 10.44.2 ||

hastābhyāṁ hastayor baddhvā padbhyām eva ca pādayoḥ

vicakarṣatur anyonyaṁ prasahya vijigīṣayā

TRANSLATION

Seizing each other's hands and locking legs with each other, the opponents struggled powerfully, eager for victory.

|| 10.44.3 ||

aratnī dve aratnibhyāṁ jānubhyāṁ caiva jānunī

śiraḥ śīrṣṇorasoras tāv anyonyam abhijaghnatuḥ

TRANSLATION

They each struck fists against fists, knees against knees, head against head and chest against chest.

COMMENTARY

Aratnī refers to making a fist with all the fingers except the little finger. Wrestling with such a pair of fists is very difficult and thus unheard of, whereas wrestling is generally done with open hands. Nevertheless, just as Kṛṣṇa invented new ways of playing on the flute as stated, *veṇu-vādya urudhā nija-siksāḥ* (SB 10.35.14), He also fought in this novel way with great skill. Though Cāṇūra experienced great difficulty with this, he accepted this style out of pride in his own ability as a heroic wrestler.

|| 10.44.4 ||

paribhrāmaṇa-vikṣepa-parirambhāvapātanaiḥ

utsarpaṇāpasarpaṇaiś cānyonyaṁ pratyarundhatām

TRANSLATION

Each fighter contended with his opponent by dragging him about in circles, shoving and crushing him, throwing him down and running before and behind him.

COMMENTARY

Paribhrāmaṇa means grabbing the other by the hands and whirling him around. *Vikṣepa* means shoving. The word *parirambha* indicates crushing one's opponent with one's arms. *Avapātanaiḥ* means throwing down the foe. *Utsarpaṇa* means releasing and running in front of the other, and *apasarpaṇaiḥ* means going behind him. In this way they countered each other's moves.

|| 10.44.5 ||

utthāpanair unnayanaiś cālanaiḥ sthāpanair api

parasparaṁ jigīṣantāv apacakratur ātmanaḥ

TRANSLATION

Forcefully lifting and carrying each other, pushing each other away and holding each other down, the fighters hurt even their own bodies in their great eagerness for victory.

COMMENTARY

Utthāpanam means pressing together the knees and feet of a fallen opponent and picking him up. *Unnayanam* means lifting the opponent with one's hands and carrying him around. *Cālanam* means pushing away the opponent who is holding onto one's throat. At other times they would fix themselves firmly (*sthāpanaiḥ*) so that the opponent could not move them. Thus attacking one another, they injured even their own bodies. Although Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma did not, of course, harm Themselves, it appeared that way to the spectators.

|| 10.44.6 ||

tad balābalavad yuddhaṁ sametāḥ sarva-yoṣitaḥ

ūcuḥ parasparaṁ rājan sānukampā varūthaśaḥ

TRANSLATION

My dear King, all the women present, considering the match an unfair fight between the strong and the weak, felt extreme anxiety due to compassion. They assembled in groups around the arena and spoke to one another as follows.

COMMENTARY

The women discussed the unfairness of the match between the strong Cāṇūra and Muṣṭika and the weak Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. The reason for this was their compassion, which was a symptom of their natural affection for Kṛṣṇa. Because of that they were unaware of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma's superior strength.

|| 10.44.7 ||

mahān ayaṁ batādharma eṣāṁ rāja-sabhā-sadām

ye balābalavad yuddhaṁ rājño 'nvicchanti paśyataḥ

TRANSLATION

[The women said:] Alas, what a greatly irreligious act the members of this royal assembly are committing! As the King watches this fight between the strong and the weak, they also want to see it.

COMMENTARY

The discussion of the women is described in ten verses (7-16). If the king sees a fight between young boys and strong adults he should stop it. When the spectators see that the king is watching they follow suit and simply watch. The king desires to watch and they imitate him.

|| 10.44.8 ||

kva vajra-sāra-sarvāṅgau mallau śailendra-sannibhau

kva cāti-sukumārāṅgau kiśorau nāpta-yauvanau

TRANSLATION

What comparison can there be between these two professional wrestlers, with limbs as strong as lightning bolts and bodies resembling mighty mountains, and these two young, immature boys with exceedingly tender limbs?

COMMENTARY

While describing the soft bodies of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, the women pointed with their fingers.

|| 10.44.9 ||

dharma-vyatikramo hy asya samājasya dhruvaṁ bhavet

yatrādharmaḥ samuttiṣṭhen na stheyaṁ tatra karhicit

TRANSLATION

Religious principles have certainly been violated in this assembly. One should not remain for even a moment in a place where irreligion is flourishing.

COMMENTARY

The women said, “Certainly there is irreligion (*dharma vatikramaḥ*) in this assembly (*samājasya*), so no one should stay here. Therefore we should immediately leave this place.”

|| 10.44.10 ||

na sabhāṁ praviśet prājñaḥ sabhya-doṣān anusmaran

abruvan vibruvann ajño naraḥ kilbiṣam aśnute

TRANSLATION

A wise person should not enter an assembly if he knows the participants there are committing acts of impropriety. And if, having entered such an assembly, he fails to speak the truth, speaks falsely or pleads ignorance, he will certainly incur sin.

COMMENTARY

Another group of women spoke, quoting the rules of the scriptures: “We have committed offense by coming here. If someone knows that there is injustice in an assembly and remains silent, or else speaks contrary to irreligious principles or acts as if ignorant saying, “I don’t know” even though one does in fact know; in any of these cases he will certainly incur sin. Therefore he should not enter the assembly.”

“This prohibition against entering the assembly is for the wise person who is concerned with worldly activities, but not for the wise person who is indifferent to such. For example, *Mahābhārata* explains that during the gambling match when Draupadī suffered her misfortune in the royal assembly, wise men such as Bhīṣma, who were concerned with worldly affairs, simply stood silently, whereas the learned Vidura, who was indifferent to ordinary affairs, exclaimed, ‘And you talk about religious duty!’ Thus all the wise persons in the wrestling arena are afraid of Kaṁsa, because they are overly attached to worldly affairs.”

|| 10.44.11 ||

valgataḥ śatrum abhitaḥ kṛṣṇasya vadanāmbujam

vīkṣyatāṁ śrama-vāry-uptaṁ padma-kośam ivāmbubhiḥ

TRANSLATION

Just see the lotus face of Kṛṣṇa as He darts around His foe! That face, covered with drops of perspiration brought on by the strenuous fight, resembles a lotus covered with dew.

COMMENTARY

"But Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma do not appear to be fatigued. There is no fault in this match since They are seen to be very strong." Anticipating such an objection, the Mathurā ladies speak this verse. "See! Due to being pursued here and there by His opponent Kṛṣṇa is showing fatigue, and has perspiration all over His moon-like face." *Vadana-ambuja* means moon face, since the word *ambuja* means lotus, moon or conch. Later in the verse Kṛṣṇa's face is compared with a lotus.

|| 10.44.12 ||

kiṁ na paśyata rāmasya mukham ātāmra-locanam

muṣṭikaṁ prati sāmarṣaṁ hāsa-saṁrambha-śobhitam

TRANSLATION

Don't you see the face of Lord Balarāma, with its eyes copper-red from His anger toward Muṣṭika and its beauty enhanced by His laughter and His absorption in the fight?

COMMENTARY

The ladies said, "The reason for Balarāma's anger (*sāmarṣaṁ*) is the fatigue brought about by Muṣṭika's blows. Balarāma appeared splendid being absorbed in fighting and laughing."

|| 10.44.13 ||

puṇyā bata vraja-bhuvo yad ayaṁ nṛ-liṅga

gūḍhaḥ purāṇa-puruṣo vana-citra-mālyaḥ

gāḥ pālayan saha-balaḥ kvaṇayaṁś ca veṇuṁ

vikrīdayāñcati giritra-ramārcitāṅghriḥ

TRANSLATION

How pious are the tracts of land in Vraja, for there the primeval Personality of Godhead, disguising Himself with human traits, wanders about, enacting His many pastimes! Adorned with wonderfully variegated forest garlands, He whose feet are worshiped by Lord Śiva and goddess Ramā vibrates His flute as He tends the cows in the company of Balarāma.

COMMENTARY

In this verse the wives of the *yajñic brāhmaṇas* in Vraja, or some ladies who share the same mentality, express their *prema* which is mixed with an awareness of Kṛṣṇa's opulences (*aiśvarya-jñāna*) due to their torment of not having His association. Becoming intolerant of the unjust behavior of the onlookers, the ladies condemn the city of Mathurā because of their pain at seeing Kṛṣṇa in what they consider an unfair wrestling match. Thus they praise Vraja and its inhabitants, and by that criticize Mathurā and it residents.

They said, "How astonishing it is (*bata*)! Materialistic people cannot understand (*gūḍhaḥ*) the human-like form (*nṛ-liṅga*) that Kṛṣṇa displays in Vraja. Kṛṣṇa wanders around engaging in various playful activities according to His own desires. We in Mathurā are most unfortunate because we simply persecute Him like this, and these people are simply watching. Though Vraja is just a forest, it is most fortunate, for there Kṛṣṇa played His flute and blissfully engaged in pastimes as the Vrajavāsīs looked on with bliss."

This is the implication of their words. The word *añcati* (wanders) is in the present tense because the women thought that Kṛṣṇa would return to Vraja. Actually however, the words cleverly establish here that the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa are eternal, as confirmed in the scriptures.

|| 10.44.14 ||

gopyas tapaḥ kim acaran yad amuṣya rūpaṁ

lāvaṇya-sāram asamordhvam ananya-siddham

dṛgbhiḥ pibanty anusavābhinavaṁ durāpam

ekānta-dhāma yaśasaḥ śrīya aiśvarasya

TRANSLATION

What austerities must the gopīs have performed! With their eyes they always drink the nectar of Lord Kṛṣṇa's form, which is the essence of loveliness and is not to be equaled or surpassed. That loveliness is the only abode of beauty, fame and opulence. It is self-perfect, ever fresh and extremely rare.

COMMENTARY

"Those who have accrued heaps of pious activities are born in the land of Vraja! Among them, the *gopīs* are the best." That is expressed in this verse.

The ladies said, "What austerities did the *gopīs* do? If anyone is omniscient, then please tell us what austerities they performed. We will perform the same austerities and be born as *gopīs* in Vraja. They drink the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's beauty while we at the arena drink the poison of His injuries. We sit here, filled with fever from the tips of our nails to the tips of our hair."

By mentioning that as a result of austerities the *gopīs* could see the beauty of Kṛṣṇa's form, they also indicate that it resulted in being embraced by Kṛṣṇa's arms, which could not be expressed in words on that occasion.

The ladies said, "One should not say that Kṛṣṇa is most excellent because of His superior beauty. Rather, the essence of all beauty is His very svarūpa (*lāvaṇya sāram*)."

But, it may be objected, since Kṛṣṇa's form is being exhibited on the earth, which is inferior to His own spiritual realms, therefore the beauty of Lord Nārāyaṇa in Mahā Vaikuṇṭha, the best of worlds, must be even sweeter than this. To this objection the ladies reply with the word *asamordhvam*, indicating that there is no beauty even equal to this, what to speak of any greater. But then from where did Kṛṣṇa acquire this

beauty? This they answer with the word *ananya-siddham* (self-perfect), meaning that such beauty is innate in Kṛṣṇa.

That may be so, but if the *gopīs* are constantly seeing this one form, it will no longer be so amazing after some time. The ladies reply, "Kṛṣṇa's form becomes newer at every moment (*anusava-abhinavam*). It is forever increasingly amazing."

So, if this is the case then the women of all other lands should also go there and take pleasure in seeing Kṛṣṇa. "No," the ladies reply, "This form is unattainable even for goddess Lakṣmī."

Granted, Kṛṣṇa's beauty is His super excellent quality. But Nārāyaṇa and others possess the full measure of six opulences and are designated as Bhagavān. The ladies counter this objection by saying *ekānta-dhāma*, "Kṛṣṇa alone is the exclusive abode and topmost reservoir of all the six opulences beginning with fame (*yaśasaḥ*), beauty (*śriyaḥ*) and so on."

|| 10.44.15 ||

yā dohane 'vahanane mathanopalepa

preṅkheṅkhanārbha-ruditokṣaṇa-mārjanādau

gāyanti cainam anurakta-dhiyo 'śru-kaṇṭhyo

dhanyā vraja-striya urukrama-citta-yānāḥ

TRANSLATION

The ladies of Vraja are the most fortunate of women because, with their minds fully attached to Kṛṣṇa and their throats always choked up with tears, they constantly sing about Him while milking the cows, winnowing grain, churning butter, gathering cow dung for fuel, riding on swings, taking care of their crying babies, sprinkling the ground with water, cleaning their houses, and so on. By their exalted Kṛṣṇa consciousness they automatically acquire all desirable things.

COMMENTARY

“And even while doing household chores, the *gopīs* were not stopped from drinking the nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s sweetness.” That is the intent of this verse.

The ladies said, “While milking the cows and doing other chores, such as swinging or sprinkling water on the ground, the Vraja-gopīs would sing about Kṛṣṇa’s name, form and qualities and have visions of Him. In this way, they taste the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa with both their tongues and their eyes without interruption. Exalted personalities like Brahmā keep Kṛṣṇa in their minds. Kṛṣṇa Himself, however, due to being completely attached (*anurakta-dhiyaḥ*) to the Vraja-gopīs, always carries them in His heart (*urukrama citta yānāh*). This shows the supremacy of the gopīs’ good fortune.”

|| 10.44.16 ||

prātar vrajād vrajata āviśataś ca sāyaṁ

gobhiḥ samaṁ kvaṇayato ’sya niśamya veṇum

nirgamya tūrṇam abalāḥ pathi bhūri-puṇyāḥ

paśyanti sa-smita-mukhaṁ sa-dayāvalokam

TRANSLATION

When the gopīs hear Kṛṣṇa playing His flute as He leaves Vraja in the morning with His cows or returns with them at sunset, the young girls quickly come out of their houses to see Him. They must have performed many pious activities to be able to see Him as He walks on the road, His smiling face mercifully glancing upon them.

COMMENTARY

The ladies said, “When Kṛṣṇa goes to the forest from Vraja in the morning and returns in the evening, the *gopīs* hear His flute and run out of their houses. They meet Kṛṣṇa in the small groves situated along the cow paths. Seeing that they are suffering due to separation, Kṛṣṇa mercifully glances upon them to fulfill their desires. This is the fortune of the women of Vraja.”

|| 10.44.17 ||

evaṁ prabhāṣamāṇāsu strīṣu yogeśvaro hariḥ

śatruṁ hantuṁ manaś cakre bhagavān bharatarṣabha

TRANSLATION

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] As the women spoke thus, O hero of the Bhāratas, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the master of all mystic power, made up His mind to kill His opponent.

COMMENTARY

Though the ladies were talking among themselves, Kṛṣṇa, being the best of *yogīs* (*yogeśvaro hariḥ*) could hear it. Thus He decided to kill Cāṇūra, in order to keep these ladies, who were very much attached to Him, from suffering.

|| 10.44.18 ||

sa-bhayāḥ strī-giraḥ śrutvā putra-sneha-śucāturau

pitarāv anvatapyetāṁ putrayor abudhau balam

TRANSLATION

Out of affection for the two Lords, Their parents [Devakī and Vasudeva] became overwhelmed with sorrow when they heard the women's fearful statements. They grieved, not knowing their sons' strength.

COMMENTARY

Pitarāv refers to Kṛṣṇa parents, Vasudeva and Devakī, or His two fathers Nanda and Vasudeva. Lamenting over the situation, Kṛṣṇa's parents thought, "Why didn't we keep our sons at home? When leaving Vraja why didn't we tell Akrūra not to bring Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma to this wrestling arena? Why did we allow Them to participate in this corrupt exhibition?"

The parental affection of Kṛṣṇa's mother and father covered their awareness of their son's incomparable strength and thus they felt remorse. There is the suggestion that this ignorance of their son's powers was temporary.

|| 10.44.19 ||

tais tair niyuddha-vidhibhir vividhair acyutetarau

yuyudhāte yathānyonyaṁ tathaiva bala-muṣṭikau

TRANSLATION

Lord Balarāma and Muṣṭika, expertly displaying numerous wrestling techniques, battled each other in the same way that Lord Kṛṣṇa and His opponent did.

COMMENTARY

Just as Kṛṣṇa and Cāṇūra (*acyutetarau*) fought with each, so Balarāma fought with Muṣṭika.

|| 10.44.20 ||

bhagavad-gātra-niṣpātair vajra-nīṣpeṣa-niṣṭhuraiḥ

cāṇūro bhajyamānāṅgo muhur glānim avāpa ha

TRANSLATION

The harsh blows from the Supreme Lord's limbs fell like crushing lightning bolts upon Cāṇūra, breaking every part of his body and causing him more and more pain and fatigue.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa injured Cāṇūra's limbs with hard blows crushing like lightning bolts.

|| 10.44.21 ||

sa śyena-vega utpatya muṣṭī-kṛtya karāv ubhau

bhagavantaṁ vāsudevaṁ kruddho vakṣasy abādhata

TRANSLATION

Furious, Cāṇūra attacked Lord Vāsudeva with the speed of a hawk and struck His chest with both fists.

COMMENTARY

Cāṇūra struck (*abādhata*) Kṛṣṇa on the chest with clenched fists.

|| 10.44.22-23 ||

nācalat tat-prahāreṇa mālāhata iva dvipaḥ

bāhvor nigṛhya cāṇūraṁ bahuśo bhrāmayan hariḥ

bhū-pṛṣṭhe pothayām āsa tarasā kṣīṇa jīvitam

visrastākalpa-keśa-srag indra-dhvaja ivāpatat

TRANSLATION

No more shaken by the demon's mighty blows than an elephant struck with a flower garland, Lord Kṛṣṇa grabbed Cāṇūra by his arms, swung him around several times and hurled him onto the ground with great force. His clothes, hair and garland scattering, the wrestler fell down dead, like a huge festival column collapsing.

COMMENTARY

The word *indra-dhvaja* means as follows: "In Bengal, on the occasion of a certain festival, people erect a tall column in the form of a man and decorate it with flags, banners, etc. Cāṇūra collapsed on the ground just as such a pole might fall."

|| 10.44.24-25 ||

tathaiva muṣṭikaḥ pūrvaṁ sva-muṣṭyābhihatena vai

balabhadreṇa balinā talenābhihato bhṛśam

pravepitaḥ sa rudhiram udvaman mukhato 'rditaḥ

vyasuḥ papātorvy-upasthe vātāhata ivāṅghripaḥ

TRANSLATION

Similarly, Muṣṭika struck Lord Balabhadra with his fist and was slain. Receiving a violent blow from the mighty Lord's palm, the demon trembled all over in

great pain, vomited blood and then fell lifeless onto the ground, like a tree blown down by the wind.

COMMENTARY

Balarāma struck Muṣṭika with His palm and Muṣṭika fell down dead on the earth. Balarāma also crushed him with His embrace and uttered foul words as he lay dying.

|| 10.44.26 ||

tataḥ kūṭam anuprāptaṁ rāmaḥ praharatāṁ varaḥ

avadhīl līlayā rājan sāvajñaṁ vāma-muṣṭinā

TRANSLATION

Confronted next by the wrestler Kūṭa, Lord Balarāma, the best of fighters, playfully and nonchalantly killed him with His left fist, O King.

|| 10.44.27 ||

tarhy eva hi śalaḥ kṛṣṇa-prapadāhata-śīrṣakaḥ

dvidhā vidīrṇas tośalaka ubhāv api nipetatuḥ

TRANSLATION

Then Kṛṣṇa struck the wrestler Śala in the head with His toes and tore him in half. The Lord dealt with Tośala in the same way, and both wrestlers fell down dead.

|| 10.44.28 ||

cāṇūre muṣṭike kūṭe śale tośalake hate

śeṣāḥ pradudruvur mallāḥ sarve prāṇa-parīpsavaḥ

TRANSLATION

Cāṇūra, Muṣṭika, Kūṭa, Śala and Tośala having been killed, the remaining wrestlers all fled for their lives.

|| 10.44.29 ||

gopān vayasyān ākṛṣya taiḥ saṁsṛjya vijahratuḥ

vādyamāneṣu tūryeṣu valgantau ruta-nūpurau

TRANSLATION

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma then called Their young cowherd boyfriends to join Them, and in their company the Lords danced about and sported, Their ankle bells resounding as musical instruments played.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma danced about, celebrating Their victory with Their friends and relatives.

|| 10.44.30 ||

janāḥ prajahṛṣuḥ sarve karmaṇā rāma-kṛṣṇayoḥ

ṛte kaṁsaṁ vipra-mukhyāḥ sādhavaḥ sādhu sādhv iti

TRANSLATION

Everyone except Kaṁsa rejoiced at the wonderful feat Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma had performed. The exalted brāhmaṇas and great saints exclaimed, "Excellent! Excellent!"

COMMENTARY

It is understood that the best among the *brāhmaṇas*, who were Kṛṣṇa's devotees, were exclaiming "Excellent! Excellent! This is very good!" The worst of the *brāhmaṇas*, however, who were Kaṁsa's low class priests, were seriously grieving, "Oh what misfortune!"

|| 10.44.31 ||

hateṣu malla-varyeṣu vidruteṣu ca bhoja-rāṭ

nyavārayat sva-tūryāṇi vākyaṁ cedam uvāca ha

TRANSLATION

The Bhoja king, seeing that his best wrestlers had all been killed or had fled, stopped the musical performance originally meant for his pleasure and spoke the following words.

|| 10.44.32 ||

niḥsārayata durvṛttau vasudevātmajau purāt

dhanaṁ harata gopānāṁ nandaṁ badhnīta durmatim

TRANSLATION

[Kaṁsa said:] Drive the two wicked sons of Vasudeva out of the city! Confiscate the cowherds' property and arrest that fool Nanda!

COMMENTARY

According to the inspiration of Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning, Kaṁsa's statement, "Drive the two wicked sons of Vasudeva out of Mathurā" can also mean "Give these boys of unattainable qualities the best position in the city. Protect Kṛṣṇa, the treasure of the cowherd men, who that most intelligent (*durmatim*) Nanda Mahārāja has tied up (*badhnīta*) with the ropes of love for Kṛṣṇa, and establish an affectionate relationship with Him."

|| 10.44.33 ||

vasudevas tu durmedhā hanyatām āśv asattamaḥ

ugrasenaḥ pitā cāpi sānugaḥ para-pakṣa-gaḥ

TRANSLATION

Kill that most evil fool Vasudeva! And also kill my father, Ugrasena, along with his followers, who have all sided with our enemies!

COMMENTARY

This verse can also mean something else. Kaṁsa said, “Everyone should take shelter of Vasudeva who has unfathomable intelligence. (The word *han* in hanyatām means to go as well as to kill.) In comparison to him, there is no one more saintly. You should also take shelter of Ugrasena who has taken shelter of the Supreme Lord (*para-pakṣa-gaḥ*).”

|| 10.44.34 ||

evaṁ vikatthamāne vai kaṁse prakupito ’vyayaḥ

laghimnotpatya tarasā mañcam uttuṅgam āruhat

TRANSLATION

As Kaṁsa thus raved so audaciously, the infallible Lord Kṛṣṇa, intensely angry, quickly and easily jumped up onto the high royal dais.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa became extremely angry (*prakupitaḥ*) upon hearing this enmity addressed to His devotees. Kṛṣṇa, unlike most living entities, does not lose His power of discrimination when He is intensely anger. Kṛṣṇa jumped so quickly on the King’s platform that no one saw Him do it.

|| 10.44.35 ||

tam āviśantam ālokya mṛtyum ātmana āsanāt

manasvī sahasotthāya jagṛhe so ’si-carmaṇī

TRANSLATION

Seeing Lord Kṛṣṇa approaching like death personified, the quick-witted Kaṁsa instantly rose from his seat and took up his sword and shield.

|| 10.44.36 ||

taṁ khaḍga-pāṇiṁ vicarantam āśu śyenaṁ yathā dakṣiṇa-savyam ambare

samagrahīd durviṣahogra-tejā yathoragaṁ tārkṣya-sutaḥ prasahya

TRANSLATION

Sword in hand, Kaṁsa moved quickly from side to side like a hawk in the sky. But Lord Kṛṣṇa, whose fearsome strength is irresistible, powerfully seized the demon just as the son of Tārkṣya might capture a snake.

|| 10.44.37 ||

pragṛhya keśeṣu calat-kirītaṁ nipātya raṅgopari tuṅga-mañcāt

tasyopariṣṭāt svayam abja-nābhaḥ papāta viśvāśraya ātma-tantraḥ

TRANSLATION

Grabbing Kaṁsa by the hair and knocking off his crown, the lotus-naveled Lord threw him off the elevated dais onto the wrestling mat. Then the independent Lord, the support of the entire universe, threw Himself upon the King.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa threw Himself upon the fallen body of Kaṁsa, so that His own body would not be injured by hitting the ground. Kṛṣṇa, wanting to kill Kaṁsa, at that moment thought of Himself (*ātma-tantraḥ*) as the shelter of the universe (*visvāśraya*) which was burdened by Kaṁsa.

|| 10.44.38 ||

taṁ samparetaṁ vicakarṣa bhūmau harir yathebhaṁ jagato vipaśyataḥ

hā heti śabdaḥ su-mahāṁs tadābhūd udīritaḥ sarva-janair narendra

TRANSLATION

As a lion drags a dead elephant, the Lord then dragged Kaṁsa's dead body along the ground in full view of everyone present. O King, all the people in the arena tumultuously cried out, "Oh! Oh!"

COMMENTARY

The spectators thought that Kaṁsa had simply been knocked unconscious when thrown from the lofty dais. They did not think he was dead. Therefore Kṛṣṇa dragged his corpse

so everyone would realize that the evil King was indeed dead. The audience expressed their surprise exclaiming “Hā! Hā!” (*hā heti*), because though Kaṁsa was a great warrior, he had been killed with such disdain. The audience’s astonishment is also mentioned in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*:

tato hāhā-kṛtaṁ sarvam āsīt tad-raṅga-maṇḍalam

avajñayā hataṁ dṛṣṭvā kṛṣṇena mathureśvaram

“Then the entire arena became filled with cries of astonish-ment as the people saw that the King of Mathurā had been contemptuously killed by Kṛṣṇa.”

|| 10.44.39 ||

sa nityadodvigna-dhiyā tam īśvaraṁ pibann adan vā vicaran svapan śvasan

dadarśa cakrāyudham agrato yatas tad eva rūpaṁ duravāpam āpa

TRANSLATION

Kaṁsa had always been disturbed by the thought that the Supreme Lord was to kill him. Therefore when drinking, eating, moving about, sleeping or simply breathing, the King had always seen the Lord before him with the disc weapon in His hand. Thus Kaṁsa achieved the rare boon of attaining a form like the Lord’s.

COMMENTARY

Although born out of fear, Kaṁsa’s constant meditation on Kṛṣṇa eradicated all his offenses, and therefore the demon got liberation. This is the intention of the verse.

|| 10.44.40 ||

tasyānujā bhrātaro ‘ṣṭau kaṅka-nyagrodhakādayaḥ

abhyadhāvann ati-kruddhā bhrātur nirveśa-kāriṇaḥ

TRANSLATION

Kaṁsa's eight younger brothers, led by Kaṅka and Nyagrodhaka, then attacked the Lords in a rage, seeking to avenge their brother's death.

COMMENTARY

Kaṁsa's brothers pursued Kṛṣṇa to absolve the debt (*nirveśa-kāriṇaḥ*) to their brother.

|| 10.44.41 ||

tathāti-rabhasāṁs tāṁs tu saṁyattān rohiṇī-sutaḥ

ahan parigham udyamya paśūn iva mṛgādhipaḥ

TRANSLATION

As they ran swiftly toward the two Lords, ready to strike, the son of Rohiṇī slew them with His club just as a lion easily kills other animals.

|| 10.44.42 ||

nedur dundubhayo vyomni brahmeśādyā vibhūtayaḥ

puṣpaiḥ kirantas taṁ prītāḥ śaśaṁsur nanṛtuḥ striyaḥ

TRANSLATION

Kettledrums resounded in the sky as Brahmā, Śiva and other demigods, the Lord's expansions, rained down flowers upon Him with pleasure. They chanted His praises, and their wives danced.

|| 10.44.43 ||

teṣāṁ striyo mahā-rāja suhṛn-maraṇa-duḥkhitāḥ

tatrābhīyur vinighnantyaḥ śīrṣāṇy aśru-vilocanāḥ

TRANSLATION

My dear King, the wives of Kaṁsa and his brothers, aggrieved by the death of their well-wishing husbands, came forward with tearful eyes, beating their heads.

|| 10.44.44 ||

śayānān vīra-śayāyāṁ patīn āliṅgya śocatīḥ

vilepuḥ su-svaraṁ nāryo visṛjantyo muhuḥ śucaḥ

TRANSLATION

Embracing their husbands, who lay on a hero's final bed, the sorrowful women loudly lamented while shedding constant tears.

COMMENTARY

The word *śocatī* stands for *śocantyaḥ* (lamenting).

|| 10.44.45 ||

hā nātha priya dharma-jña karuṇānātha-vatsala

tvayā hatena nihatā vayaṁ te sa-gṛha-prajāḥ

TRANSLATION

[The women cried out:] Alas, O master, O dear one, O knower of religious principles! O kind and compassionate protector of the shelterless! By your being slain we have also been slain, together with your household and offspring.

COMMENTARY

The daughter of Jarāsandha and others who were married speak in two verses. "Along with our houses and offspring we also have been killed."

|| 10.44.46 ||

tvayā virahitā patyā purīyaṁ puruṣarṣabha

na śobhate vayam iva nivṛttotsava-maṅgalā

TRANSLATION

O great hero among men, bereft of you, its master, this city has lost its beauty, just as we have, and all festivity and good fortune within it have come to an end.

|| 10.44.47 ||

anāgasāṁ tvaṁ bhūtānāṁ kṛtavān droham ulbaṇam

tenemāṁ bho daśāṁ nīto bhūta-dhruk ko labheta śam

TRANSLATION

O dear one, you have been brought to this state because of the terrible violence you committed against innocent creatures. How can one who harms others attain happiness?

COMMENTARY

The ladies now speak practical wisdom because their minds were purified by Kṛṣṇa's association and the agony of the recent events.

|| 10.44.48 ||

sarveṣām iha bhūtānām eṣa hi prabhavāpyayaḥ

goptā ca tad-avadhyāyī na kvacit sukham edhate

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa causes the appearance and disappearance of all beings in this world, and He is their maintainer as well. One who disrespects Him can never prosper happily.

COMMENTARY

The ladies said, "He (*eṣaḥ*), Kṛṣṇa, is the source (*prabhava*) and ultimate resting place (*apyaya*) of all living entities. Those who disrespect (*tad-avadhyāyī*) Kṛṣṇa never attain happiness."

|| 10.44.49 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

rāja-yoṣita āśvāsya bhagavāû loka-bhāvanaḥ

yām āhur laukikīṁ saṁsthāṁ hatānāṁ samakārayat

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: After consoling the royal ladies, Lord Kṛṣṇa, sustainer of all the worlds, arranged for the prescribed funeral rites to be performed.

COMMENTARY

“O wives of Kaṁsa! Today you have met with great misfortune. But I am obligated to protect you, so why should you worry?” In this way Kṛṣṇa consoled them.

|| 10.44.50 ||

mātaraṁ pitaraṁ caiva mocayitvātha bandhanāt

kṛṣṇa-rāmau vavandāte śirasā spṛśya pādayoḥ

TRANSLATION

Then Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma released Their mother and father from bondage and offered obeisances to them, touching their feet with Their heads.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma touched (*spṛśya: samyak*) their heads promi-nently to the feet of Vasudeva and Devakī.

|| 10.44.51 ||

devakī vasudevaś ca vijñāya jagad-īśvarau

kṛta-saṁvandanau putrau sasvajāte na śaṅkitau

TRANSLATION

Devakī and Vasudeva, now knowing Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma to be the Lords of the universe, simply stood with joined palms. Being apprehensive, they did not embrace their sons.

COMMENTARY

Remembering the events of Kṛṣṇa's birth and observing His power in killing Kaṁsa, Vasudeva and Devakī saw Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Lord and therefore could not embrace Him. Being aware of the custom that parents do not bow to their children, Vasudeva and Devakī did not offer obeisances to Kṛṣṇa. Paralyzed from fear, they simply stood there.

Thus ends the commentary on the Forty Fourth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Forty-five

Kṛṣṇa Rescues His Teacher’s Son

|| 10.45.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

pitarāv upalabdhārthau viditvā puruṣottamaḥ

mā bhūd iti nijāṁ māyāṁ tatāna jana-mohinīm

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Understanding that His parents were becoming aware of His transcendental opulences, the Supreme Personality of Godhead thought that this should not be allowed to happen. Thus He expanded His Yogamāyā, which bewilders His devotees.

COMMENTARY

In this chapter, Kṛṣṇa consoles Devakī and Vasudeva, sends Nanda and the cowherdmen back to Vraja, installs Ugrasena as king, and goes to *gurukula* to absorb Himself in study.

Understanding that His mother and father were endowed with the treasure of seeing Him as almighty God, Kṛṣṇa began to consider, “Let that perception vanish and let them

be covered by the ecstasy of parental love (*vātsalya-rasa*), so that both of us will attain supreme bliss." That is the meaning of *upalabdhārthau*. Thus thinking, Kṛṣṇa expanded His internal potency, *yogamāyā*, to cover their awareness of His godly powers.

The word *jana* may be translated as "devotees," as in the verse *dīyamānaṁ na gṛhṇanti vinā mat-sevanaṁ janaḥ* (SB 3.29.13). Thus it refers to that *māyā* whose nature is to bewilder the devotees. *Jana* may also be translated as "parents," since *jana* is derived from the verb *jan*, which in its causative form (*janayate*) means "to generate or to give birth to." In this sense of the word (as in *jananī* or *janakau*), the term *jana-mohinī* indicates that Kṛṣṇa was about to expand His internal illusory potency so that Vasudeva and Devakī would again love Him as their dear child.

Śrīdhara Swāmī described Kṛṣṇa's inner intention: "If I am simply satisfied, then what knowledge is there that will remain inaccessible to them? On the other hand, pure love for Me with the idea that I am their son is indeed difficult to achieve". Thus Kṛṣṇa's words in the following verses should not be considered deceptive, because He will speak in such a way as to invoke their parental love.

|| 10.45.2 ||

uvāca pitarāv etya sāgrajaḥ sātvanarṣabhaḥ

praśrayāvanataḥ prīṇann amba tāteti sādaram

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa, the greatest of the Sātvatas, approached His parents with His elder brother. Humbly bowing His head and gratifying them by respectfully addressing them as "My dear mother" and "My dear father," Kṛṣṇa spoke as follows.

|| 10.45.3 ||

nāsmatto yuvayos tāta nityotkaṇṭhitayor api

bālya-paugaṇḍa-kaiśorāḥ putrābhyām abhavan kvacit

TRANSLATION

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] Dear Father, because of Us, your two sons, you and mother Devakī always remained in anxiety and could never enjoy Our childhood, boyhood or youth.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “Because of your anxiety for Us, you never experienced the happiness of raising Us through the *bālya*, *paugaṇḍa* and *kaiśora* ages (childhood, boyhood or youth).”

It may be objected that the women of Mathurā mentioned that Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were of *kaiśora* age, and had not reached *yauvana: kva cāti-sukumārāṅgau kiśorau nāpta-yauvanau*: “Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma have very tender limbs, being still at the *kaiśora* stage, not having reached adolescence (*yauvanam*).” (SB 10.44.8) Thus the match between the huge wrestlers and the young boys was unequal. Therefore it cannot be said that They had finished their *kaiśora* age.

The definition of the different stages of growing up is given as follows:

kaumāraṁ pañcamābdāntaṁ paugaṇḍaṁ daśamāvadhi
kaiśoram ā-pañcadaśād yauvanaṁ tu tataḥ param

“The *kaumāra* stage lasts until the age of five, *paugaṇḍa* up to age ten and *kaiśora* to age fifteen. From then on, one is known as *yauvana*.” According to this statement, the *kaiśora* period ends at the age of fifteen. Kṛṣṇa was only eleven years old when He killed Kaṁsa, as verified by Uddhava’s words: *ekādaśa-samās tatra gūḍhārciḥ sa-balo ’vasat*. “Like a covered flame, Kṛṣṇa remained there incognito with Balarāma for eleven years” (SB 3.2.26) And since Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma never took *brahminical* initiation in Vraja-bhūmi, it was at the time of Their going to Mathurā that Their *kaiśora* stage began rather than ended.

“This objection to Lord Kṛṣṇa’s statement in the present verse—that His parents could not enjoy His *kaiśora* stage—is based on ordinary measurement of age. Yet we should consider the following statement from the Bhāgavatam (10.8.26)]:

kālenālpena rājarṣe rāmaḥ kṛṣṇaś ca go-vraje
aghṛṣṭa-jānubhiḥ padbhir vicakramatur añjasā

“O King Parīkṣit, within a short time Rāma and Kṛṣṇa began to walk very easily in Gokula on Their legs, by Their own strength, without the need to crawl.”

> Sometimes we see that a prince, even while in his *paugaṇḍa* stage of life, undergoes exceptional physical growth and exhibits activities appropriate to a *kaiśora*. Then what to speak of Lord Kṛṣṇa, whose exceptional growth is established in the *Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī, Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu, Ānanda-vṛndavana-campū* and other works?"

At the age of three years and four months, Kṛṣṇa displayed the qualities of a five year old while spending His *kaumāra* age in Mahāvana. The period from then to the age of six years and eight months, during which He lived in Vṛndāvana, constitutes His *paugaṇḍa* stage. The period from the age of six years and eight months through His tenth year, during which time He lived in Nandīśvara (Nandagrāma), constitutes His *kaiśora* stage. Then, at the age of ten years and seven months, on the eleventh lunar day of the dark fortnight of the month of Caitra, Kṛṣṇa went to Mathurā, and on the fourteenth day thereafter He killed Kaṁsa. Thus Kṛṣṇa completed His *kaiśora* period at age ten, and He eternally remains at that age. In other words, we should understand that from this point on Kṛṣṇa remains forever a *kiśora*.

This point is illustrated by the following statement in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.55.28): "When Pradyumna, who was of *kaiśora* age, entered the inner apartments of Kṛṣṇa's palace in Dvārakā, he appeared the same as Kṛṣṇa and the women hid themselves out of shame" (*kṛṣṇam matvā striyo hrītā nililyus tatra tatra ha*). There are also similar statements in the *Āgamas* and *Pañcarātra*. Thus on the day of killing Kaṁsa, Kṛṣṇa had both passed the *kaiśora* age and not passed it. By this explanation there is harmony between Kṛṣṇa's statement in this verse that His *kaiśora* age had passed, and the statement of the Mathurā women that He was in His *kaiśora* age.

|| 10.45.4 ||

na labdho daiva-hatayor vāso nau bhavad-antike

yāṁ bālāḥ pitṛ-geha-sthā vindante lālitā mudam

TRANSLATION

Deprived by fate, We could not live with you and enjoy the pampered happiness most children enjoy in their parents' home.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, "We also have been unfortunate (*daiva hatayoḥ*)." However, the actual meaning of the words is this: "We have attained good fortune (*bhāgyena prāptayoḥ*) in not obtaining the happiness of ordinary children."

|| 10.45.5 ||

sarvārtha-sambhavo deho janitaḥ poṣito yataḥ

na tayor yāti nirveśaṁ pitror martyaḥ śatāyuṣā

TRANSLATION

With one's body one can acquire all goals of life, and it is one's parents who give the body birth and sustenance. Therefore no mortal man can repay his debt to his parents, even if he serves them for a full lifetime of a hundred years.

COMMENTARY

Having stated, "Both you and We have suffered because of Our separation," Kṛṣṇa now states that His and Balarāma's religious principles have been spoiled by Their failure to satisfy Their parents. Kṛṣṇa said, "One cannot repay the debt to the parents who give birth to the body even with a lifetime of a hundred years."

|| 10.45.6 ||

yas tayor ātmajaḥ kalpa ātmanā ca dhanena ca

vṛttiṁ na dadyāt taṁ pretya sva-māṁsaṁ khādayanti hi

TRANSLATION

A son who, though able to do so, fails to provide for his parents with his physical resources and wealth is forced after his death to eat his own flesh.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, "According to the *karma-kāṇḍa* rules of the *Vedas*, a son who, even though he is able, does not support his parents, is forced to eat his own flesh after death by the Yamadūtas."

|| 10.45.7 ||

mātaraṁ pitaraṁ vṛddhaṁ bhāryāṁ sādhvīṁ sutam śiśum

guruṁ vipraṁ prapannaṁ ca kalpo 'bibhrac chvasan-mṛtaḥ

TRANSLATION

A man who, though able to do so, fails to support his elderly parents, chaste wife, young child or spiritual master, or who neglects a brāhmaṇa or anyone who comes to him for shelter, is considered dead, though breathing.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “One who does not support (*abibhrat*) his mother, father and others, though living is considered dead.”

|| 10.45.8 ||

tan nāv akalpayoḥ kaṁsān nityam udvigna-cetasoḥ

mogham ete vyatikrāntā divasā vām anarcatoḥ

TRANSLATION

Thus We have wasted all these days, unable as We were to properly honor you because Our minds were always disturbed by fear of Kaṁsa.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “Therefore because We were unable to serve you for fear of Kaṁsa (*kaṁsān nityam udvigna-cetaso*), Our days have passed uselessly and We are at fault.”

But the real meaning is, “We spent all these days uselessly. Our minds were eager to go to Mathurā because we heard about Kaṁsa and We wanted to fight him (*udvigna-cetaso*), but We were not able to go.” In this case *udvigna* means moving or going (*vij*). Kṛṣṇa’s saying that He spent His days uselessly (*mogham*) is an expression of regret.

|| 10.45.9 ||

tat kṣantum arhathas tāta mātar nau para-tantrayoḥ

akurvator vāṁ śuśrūṣāṁ kliṣṭayor durhṛdā bhṛśam

TRANSLATION

Dear Father and Mother, please forgive Us for not serving you. We are not independent and have been greatly frustrated by cruel Kaṁsa.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “Please forgive Us for not serving you, who were under the control of evil minded Kaṁsa and being tormented by him.”

|| 10.45.10 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

iti māyā-manuṣyasya harer viśvātmano girā

mohitāv aṅkam āropya pariṣvajyāpatur mudam

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus beguiled by the words of Lord Hari, the Supreme Soul of the universe, who by His internal illusory potency appeared to be a human, His parents joyfully raised Him up on their laps and embraced Him.

COMMENTARY

Bewildered by the words of Kṛṣṇa, who was deceptively appearing as a human being (*māyā-manuṣyasya*), Vasudeva and Devakī embraced Him.

|| 10.45.11 ||

siñcantāv aśru-dhārābhiḥ sneha-pāśena cāvṛtau

na kiñcid ūcatū rājan bāṣpa-kaṇṭhau vimohitau

TRANSLATION

Pouring out a shower of tears upon the Lord, His parents, who were bound up by the rope of affection, could not speak. They were overwhelmed, O King, and their throats choked up with tears.

|| 10.45.12 ||

evam āśvāsya pitarau bhagavān devakī-sutaḥ

mātāmahaṁ tūgrasenaṁ yadūnām akaron ṇṛpam

TRANSLATION

Thus having comforted His mother and father, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, appearing as the son of Devakī, installed His maternal grandfather, Ugrasena, as King of the Yadus.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa's comforting Vasudeva and Devakī occurred out of the sight of Nanda. Nanda Mahārāja said, "My son, fatigued from the fight, has retired to the inner chambers where Vasudeva and others are affectionately feeding Him in great bliss. Since Kṛṣṇa is with them, I will now go to my own rooms without any fear for my son's safety." Saying this, Nanda Mahārāja went to his quarters in the cowherds' camp outside Mathurā and therefore did not see the exchange between Kṛṣṇa, Vasudeva and Devakī described in these verses.

|| 10.45.13 ||

āha cāsmān mahā-rāja prajāś cājñaptum arhasi

yayāti-śāpād yadubhir nāsitavyaṁ nṛpāsane

TRANSLATION

The Lord told him: O mighty King, We are your subjects, so please command Us. Indeed, because of the curse of Yayāti, no Yadu may sit on the royal throne.

COMMENTARY

Ugrasena might have told Kṛṣṇa, "My dear Lord, it is actually You who should sit on the throne." Anticipating this statement, Kṛṣṇa said, "You should be the king and you should give Us orders. If you say that the Yadus should not sit on the throne because of the curse of Yayāti, I say, that though you are a Yadu, there is no fault if I order you to sit on the royal throne."

|| 10.45.14 ||

mayi bhṛtya upāsīne bhavato vibudhādayaḥ

baliṁ haranty avanatāḥ kim utānye narādhipāḥ

TRANSLATION

Since I am present in your entourage as your personal attendant, all the demigods and other exalted personalities will come with heads bowed to offer you tribute. What, then, to speak of the rulers of men?

COMMENTARY

If Ugrasena were to object and say that he did not have the power to be the king, Kṛṣṇa says, “If I am engaged as your servant, then all the demigods will also serve you.”

|| 10.45.15-16 ||

sarvān svān jñati-sambandhān digbhyaḥ kaṁsa-bhayākulān

yadu-vṛṣṇy-andhaka-madhu dāśārha-kukurādikān

sabhājitān samāśvāsya videśāvāsa-karśitān

nyavāsayat sva-geheṣu vittaiḥ santarpya viśva-kṛt

TRANSLATION

The Lord then brought all His close family members and other relatives back from the various places to which they had fled in fear of Kaṁsa. He received the Yadus, Vṛṣṇis, Andhakas, Madhus, Dāśārhas, Kukuras and other clans with due honor, and He also consoled them, for they were weary of living in foreign lands. Then Lord Kṛṣṇa, the creator of the universe, resettled them in their homes and gratified them with valuable gifts.

|| 10.45.17-18 ||

kṛṣṇa-saṅkarṣaṇa-bhujair guptā labdha-manorathāḥ

gṛheṣu remire siddhāḥ kṛṣṇa-rāma-gata-jvarāḥ

vīkṣanto ’har ahaḥ prītā mukunda-vadanāmbujam

nityaṁ pramuditaṁ śrīmat sa-daya-smita-vīkṣaṇam

TRANSLATION

The members of these clans, protected by the arms of Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa, felt that all their desires were fulfilled. Thus they enjoyed perfect happiness while living at home with their families. Because of the presence of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, they no longer suffered from the fever of material

existence. Every day these loving devotees could see Mukunda's ever-cheerful lotus face, which was decorated with beautiful, merciful smiling glances.

|| 10.45.19 ||

tatra pravayaso 'py āsan yuvāno 'ti-balaujasaḥ

pibanto 'kṣair mukundasya mukhāmbuja-sudhāṁ muhuḥ

TRANSLATION

Even the most elderly inhabitants of the city appeared youthful, full of strength and vitality, for with their eyes they constantly drank the elixir of Lord Mukunda's lotus face.

COMMENTARY

Those who were old (*pravayasaḥ*) became strong and energetic.

|| 10.45.20 ||

atha nandaṁ samasādya bhagavān devakī-sutaḥ

saṅkarṣaṇaś ca rājendra pariṣvajyedam ūcatuḥ

TRANSLATION

Then, O exalted Parīkṣit, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī, along with Lord Balarāma, approached Nanda Mahārāja. The two Lords embraced him and then addressed him as follows.

COMMENTARY

After discussing the events of several days, now the day after Kaṁsa's death the word *atha* (then) is uttered to introduce a very important but inscrutable topic.

Identifying Himself as his son, Kṛṣṇa approached Nanda Mahārāja. The word *devakī-sutaḥ* indicates that Kṛṣṇa was hiding His identity as the son of Devakī. The word

bhagavān implies that Kṛṣṇa was utilizing His personal opulence potency (*aiśvarya-śakti*) to accom-plish this.

The phrase *saṅkarṣaṇaś ca* (Balarāma) implies that He was demonstrating the etymology of His name, as is stated in the *Bhāgavatam* 10.8.12: *yadūnām apṛthag-bhāvāt saṅkarṣaṇam uśanty api*, "Garga Muni said, 'Moreover, because Balarāma unites two families—Vasudeva's family and the family of Nanda Mahārāja—He will be known as Saṅkarṣaṇa.'"

The word "embracing" (*pariṣvajya*) implies that there was no oppor-tunity to offering obeisances because as soon as Nanda Mahārāja beheld Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, he submerged in an ocean of ecstasy. Immediately he raised both boys with his two strong arms and held them tightly to his broad chest. Though it was Nanda who embraced Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, the embrace is attributed to Them in this verse. When Nanda sat down, still embracing Them, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma spoke humbly to comfort him, after answering many questions and with hesitation revealing their offenses against the Yadus.

|| 10.45.21 ||

pitar yuvābhyāṁ snigdhābhyāṁ poṣitau lālitau bhṛśam

pitror abhyadhikā prītir ātmajeṣv ātmano 'pi hi

TRANSLATION

[Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma said:] O Father, you and mother Yaśodā have affectionately maintained Us and cared for Us so much! Indeed, parents love their children more than their own lives.

COMMENTARY

Balarāma, being elder, spoke first in two verses. "O father! We were cared for and protected by the two of you (Nanda and Yaśodā). Of course, it is natural that mothers and fathers have greater love for their children than even for their own bodies." By the dual number of the words *poṣitau* (maintained) and *lālitau* (coddled) Balarāma indicates that Nanda and Yaśodā felt the same affection for both children. "You were as much My parents as you were Kṛṣṇa's parents."

By this Balarāma also hints that, “Without you two, My loving parents, and without My brother Kṛṣṇa, who is millions of times dearer to Me than My own life, I cannot remain in this city in the house of My unknown parents, Vasudeva and Devakī.”

|| 10.45.22 ||

sa pitā sā ca jananī yau puṣṇītāṁ sva-putra-vat

śiśūn bandhubhir utsṛṣṭān akalpaiḥ poṣa-rakṣaṇe

TRANSLATION

They are the real father and mother who care for, as they would their own sons, children abandoned by relatives unable to maintain and protect them.

COMMENTARY

Nanda may say, “But, my dear Balabhadra, actually You are the legitimate son of my friend Vasudeva. How can he, now having attained release from his long-standing dangerous situation, give up his own son? Therefore You must immediately go to Your father’s house and stay there. The two of us will somehow carry on living by blocking up our hearts which will be torn apart by separation from You with the stone of discrimination. But I cannot bear to see the suffering of my friend Vasudeva. We, after all, are only Your foster parents.”

Balarāma replies in this verse: “Those who care for a child as their own son are the actual mother and father. The seminal father is not the real father, and she who bears the child in her womb is not the real mother. If the father and mother abandon a child and the child dies, can they be called the mother and father? The foster parents who raise the child are more worthy of respect by the discerning child. Therefore I will not be able to stay here. Even if Brahmā himself comes and orders Me, he will not be able to change My mind.”

“Alas! Alas! O father! Kṛṣṇa will go with you and happily play in Vraja, but I will stay in Mathurā burning in the forest fire of separation from Kṛṣṇa. That cannot be! Therefore I make this oath. If Kṛṣṇa leaves Me behind and goes off to Vraja, then My life will be finished.” This is the intention of Balarāma’s words in this verse.

|| 10.45.23 ||

yāta yūyaṁ vrajaṁn tāta vayaṁ ca sneha-duḥkhitān

jñātīn vo draṣṭum eṣyāmo vidhāya suhṛdāṁ sukham

TRANSLATION

Now you should all return to Vraja, dear Father. We shall come to see you, Our dear relatives who suffer in separation from Us, as soon as We have given some happiness to your well-wishing friends.

COMMENTARY

After hearing the words of Balarāma, Nanda Mahārāja thought, “Alas, alas, what can I do? If I take Baladeva back to Vraja, all will rejoice, but the Yādavas and especially Vasudeva will suffer great distress. It would be a great sin for me. Vasudeva will think, ‘Ah, ah! Kaṁsa killed all my sons, and the one son who was protected from his hands, Balabhadra, has been taken by Nanda to Vraja. Therefore Nanda is not my friend but rather a second Kaṁsa for me, who am being ruined by Providence.’ Thus thinking, Vasudeva will experience extreme pain and curse me thousands of times. Then how will I or indeed Kṛṣṇa enjoy any happiness at all?”

Seeing Nanda standing silent for several minutes lost in such anxious thoughts, Kṛṣṇa addressed him consolingly with logical reasoning in this verse: “O father, you should now go to Vraja. I, Baladeva and My friends like Madhumaṅgala will go to Vraja later in order to see you, but now We will stay in Mathurā for a few days.”

Anticipating that Nanda Mahārāja would ask when He would return to Vraja, Kṛṣṇa said, “After giving happiness to your friends headed by Vasudeva, so that no one will find fault with you, We will come home to Vraja. First we will unite Baladeva with His parents so that they can coddle Him and express their affection to their hearts’ content. Then upon completing all necessary work and making everyone happy, We will come back to Vraja.”

|| 10.45.24 ||

evaṁ sāntvayya bhagavān nandaṁ sa-vrajam acyutaḥ

vāso-’laṅkāra-kupyādyair arhayām āsa sādaram

TRANSLATION

Thus consoling Nanda Mahārāja and the other men of Vraja, the infallible Supreme Lord respectfully honored them with gifts of clothing, jewelry, household utensils and so on.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa consoled Nanda, “You should not worry about My staying in Mathurā a few days longer. My mind is always in Vraja, and I am only staying here by their desires.” Kṛṣṇa honored Nanda Mahārāja and gave the Vrajavāsīs bell metal (*kupya*) pots and other gifts.

|| 10.45.25 ||

ity uktas tau pariṣvajya nandaḥ praṇaya-vihvalaḥ

pūrayann aśrubhir netre saha gopair vrajaṁ yayau

TRANSLATION

Nanda Mahārāja was overwhelmed with affection upon hearing Kṛṣṇa’s words, and his eyes brimmed with tears as he embraced the two Lords. Then he went back to Vraja with the cowherd men.

COMMENTARY

Although Nanda Mahārāja was almost unconscious (*praṇaya-vihvalaḥ*) due to separation from his son, he somehow returned to Vraja. Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma went to Vasudeva’s house and lived there happily. Some experts in *rasa*, who cannot tolerate even a slight decrease in *prema*, object to this incident of Kṛṣṇa staying away from Vraja. Later on in this purport we will reconcile their objections with a novel interpretation. May it be accepted by those who appreciate it.

The objection is this: It is clear that the literal meaning of verses 21-25 is unfavorable to *prema*. Even in all the explanations given, *prema* is not established; for there is separation of Nanda and Kṛṣṇa. In this connection Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Lord, whose pastimes are inscrutable, so He may be able to abandon His father and stay in Mathurā. But how could Nanda abandon Kṛṣṇa and go back to Vraja alone? How could Nanda Mahārāja give up Kṛṣṇa, who is millions of times more dear to him than his own life, for the cows in Vraja? Why did he not take up residence on the outskirts of Mathurā instead?

Furthermore, the reasons given in the verses for Kṛṣṇa and Balarāmas’ staying in Mathurā are weak, only meant to pacify Nanda. Even Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were not convinced in their minds of what They spoke. After all, the Tenth Canto only describes that Balarāma returned to Vraja (Ch. 65) and not Kṛṣṇa. However, the *Padma Purāṇa*,

Uttara khaṇḍa states that after killing all the demons that He had to, up to Dantavakra, Kṛṣṇa returned to Vraja. There is also evidence in the *Bhāgavatam* (1.11.9):

> *yarhy ambujākṣāpasasāra bho bhavān, kurūn madhūn*
>
> *vātha suhṛd-didṛkṣaya, tatrābda-koṭi-pratimaḥ kṣaṇo bhaved*
>
> "The residents of Dvārakā said, 'O lotus-eyed Lord, when-ever You go away to Mathurā, Vṛndāvana or Hastināpura to meet Your friends and relatives, every moment of Your absence seems like a million years.'"

However these scriptural references do not clearly show the presence of their *prema*. Nevertheless, just consider the statement of Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (10.39.35):

> *tās tathā tapyatīr vīkṣya sva-prasthāṇe yadūttamaḥ*
>
> *sāntvayām asa sa-premair āyāsya iti dautyakaiḥ*
>
> "As Kṛṣṇa departed, that best of the Yadus saw how the *gopīs* were lamenting, and thus He consoled them by sending a messenger with this loving promise: 'I will return.'"

The word *dautyakaiḥ* (messenger) is in the plural to indicate that Kṛṣṇa sent many messengers, or one messenger who repeated the same message, "I will return, I will return, I will return." What type of words did Kṛṣṇa use in His message? He used words full of love (*sa premaiḥ*). Kṛṣṇa said, "O gopīs ! I am leaving you today only because of King Kaṁsa's invitation to the Dhanur-yajña, which is difficult to refuse. It is not at all by My own desire. After seeing the Dhanur-yajña, I will return the next day. If some other work comes, I will also finish that tomorrow and quickly return the next day." If these words were really what Kṛṣṇa was thinking, then they can be called *sa-premaiḥ*, filled with love. But if they are not, then they are deceitful.

We may think that these statements to Nanda Mahārāja are similar in purpose to those Kṛṣṇa made to Vasudeva and Devakī in verse four of this chapter to bewilder them:

na labdho daiva-hatayor vāso nau bhavad-antike

yāṁ bālāḥ pitṛ-geha-sthā vindante lālitā mudam

"Deprived by fate, We could not live with you in Mathurā and enjoy the pampered happiness most children enjoy in their parents' home."

Perhaps Kṛṣṇa's words to the gopīs are similar. But then why does Śukadeva Gosvāmī use the words "*sa-premaiḥ*" to describe Kṛṣṇa's words to the *gopīs*? If Kṛṣṇa had returned to Vraja the day after killing Kaṁsa without considering all His other duties such as killing Jarāsandha, then one could understand that Kṛṣṇa was concerned with the *gopīs*' love. But if He did otherwise, one can only conclude that He was indifferent to their love. Therefore the word *sa-premaiḥ* (with love) would be false.

The reconciliation of all these objections is as follows: Even though Vasudeva and Devakī are full of *prema* and cannot be neglected, the devotees in Vraja headed by Nanda Mahārāja have *prema* which is unequalled and unexcelled. Therefore, it would certainly be all the more improper to ignore them. The purpose of Kṛṣṇa's appearance to kill the demons and protect the devotees must also be carried out. In addition, Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in Dvārakā and other places must be exhibited, such as kidnapping Rukmiṇī, stealing the *pārijāta* tree, and associating with Yudhiṣṭhira. Kṛṣṇa must also fulfill His promise to the *gopīs* to return after seeing the Dhanur-yajña (bow sacrifice). Kṛṣṇa also had to reveal the super excellence of the *gopīs*' love to the world by showing it to Uddhava, the most exalted of the entire retinue of the Lord's devotees in Mathurā and Dvārakā and the crown jewel of the learned. Just as a man places his valuable gold within fire to reveal its purity, Kṛṣṇa placed His most beloved devotees, the Vraja-gopīs, in the fire of separation from Him in order to manifest the unprecedented quality of their *Kṛṣṇa-prema*.

Having all these activities to carry out, Kṛṣṇa resorted to His inconceivably powerful *yogamāyā* potency, and along with Balarāma came before Nanda. At that time Kṛṣṇa manifested two separate forms of Nanda and the other devotees present and Himself and Balarāma as well. Kṛṣṇa's words to Nanda in verses 21-23, and the descriptions of the next two verses (24-25), presented by the first form have been explained.

But Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma in their second forms also speak, asking a question. "O father, we have been raised by you with great affection. But are We just your adopted sons and not your actual sons? Please tell Us factually. King Ugrasena and all the Yādavas in this place say that We are only your adopted sons. Therefore Vasudeva and Devakī, thinking Us to be their sons, are showing Us excessive affection and trying to keep Us here in Mathurā indefinitely. They don't permit Us to come see you. Though you are their dear friend, they have not even invited you to dine with them tomorrow according to the rules of etiquette. All this time none of the Yādavas have come to pay you a visit. Being very

disturbed, We have run away by force without their knowing to come to see you." This is the meaning of verse twenty-one according to the second form of Kṛṣṇa.

In reply to this the second form of Nanda said, "But, my dear Kṛṣṇa! In a previous life You were Vasudeva's son, as Garga Ṛsi told me at Your name-giving ceremony, *prāg ayaṁ Vasudevasya kvacij jātas tavātmajaḥ* (SB 10.8.14). I would assume that he also told this to Vasudeva. Therefore even in this lifetime Vasudeva is thinking of You, the ocean of all good qualities, as if You were His son and thus wants to keep You here. I understand, however, that Baladeva is his own proper son, whom he wants to take back home. Now I am asking You a question. Do You think that we, as these people of Mathurā say, are only Your foster parents? And are You only our foster sons?"

Kṛṣṇa answered this question (verse twenty-one) with tears in His eyes. "Parents have greater affection for the children born from themselves than they have even for their own bodies and souls. If I were merely your adopted son then how could I have become millions of times more dear to you than your own lives? Therefore I will never again even look upon the face of Vasudeva and these other enemies of yours!"

Then Nanda spoke to Baladeva, "But my darling son Baladeva! Please tell me what You think in this regard?" Baladeva said (verse twenty-two), "Those who raise the children are the real parents. Therefore I will not stay in Vasudeva's house without you and Kṛṣṇa, even if Brahmā himself commands." This verse has been previously explained in a similar way.

Nanda Mahārāja thought, "If I take Baladeva with Me back to Vraja, then Vasudeva and the other devotees in Mathurā will become extremely unhappy. The selfish persons in Mathurā like Kaṁsa and other demons have shown enmity to Me but why should I act inimi-cally?" While Nanda was pondering over this, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma suddenly spoke (verse twenty-three): "O father, you should return to Vraja and We will come later. We will not stay here a moment more than necessary. You know the statement of the *Nītī-śāstra*, 'If one has a relative what is the need of fire, and if there is a good friend, what is the necessity of medicine?' If out of your compassion you cannot tolerate the Yādavas' suffering, then listen. We will visit Vasudeva and your relatives (*jñātin*), and give happiness to your friends by letting them see Us."

Thus addressed by Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, Nanda Mahārāja embraced them strongly with both arms just as a miser holds his wealth to his chest and does not let it fall away (verse twenty-five). Beside himself with loving affection (*praṇaya vihvala*), and his eyes filled with tears of ecstasy (*pūrayann aśrubhir netre*), Nanda Mahārāja mounted a

golden chariot and went off to Vraja. By the power of *yogamāyā*, one Nanda Mahārāja separated from Kṛṣṇa and went to Vraja alone, while the other Nanda, invisible to the other, remained in Kṛṣṇa's association in Vraja. In this same way, all the Vraja-gopīs, *gopas*, and their animals expanded into two separate manifestations. One set was immersed in an ocean of suffering with Nanda in separation from Kṛṣṇa, and the other set was immersed in an ocean of bliss along with Nanda in association with Kṛṣṇa. They existed simultaneously in Vraja without seeing or contacting each other.

This is similar to how Nārada Muni saw so many separate manifestations of Kṛṣṇa in Dvārakā. In one place Devakī was happily caring for Kṛṣṇa and feeding Him, and simultaneously at another place Devakī was suffering in separation from Kṛṣṇa, lamenting, "Alas, alas, why has my son, who went out to hunt, not returned yet? He must be pained by hunger and thirst." This is stated in the *Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta* (5.512):

> *āścaryam ekadaikātra, vartamānāny api dhruvam,*
>
> *parasparam asampṛkta, svarūpāṇy eva sarvathā*
>
> "How astonishing that though two forms were present in the same place at once, each form was unaware of the other form and did not contact it."

Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta (1.20) further says: *prakāśas tu na bhedesu, ganyate sa hi nau pṛthak*, "*Prakāśa-rūpas* are the same form manifest in many places." Although Kṛṣṇa's *prakāśa* manifestations are not factually different from Him, still, by the influence of His *līlā-śakti*, a differentiation develops among His self-identities, activities and so on. This will become clear later on, in the chapter on the power of *yogamāyā* and in the story of Bahulāśva and Śrutadeva.

Thus the two separate manifestations have, respectively, two different purposes. Just as one subjects his precious gold to fire in order to reveal its true form, similarly it was in order to show to Uddhava, the chief among His personal associates situated in pure love of God, the supreme position of the Vraja-gopīs' astonishing prema with its characteristics of *divyonmāda* (divine madness) and *citra-jalpa* (artful chatter), that Kṛṣṇa first of all manifested His particular manifestation in the mood of separation. Upon going to Vraja and witnessing the superiority of this *mahā-prema*, Uddhava would then announce to the world the supreme excellence of the *gopīs*' love in such verses as this:

> *etāḥ paraṁ tanu-bhṛto bhuvi gopa-vadhvo*
>
> *govinda eva nikhilātmani rūḍha-bhāvāḥ*
>
> *vāñchanti yad bhava-bhiyo munayo vayaṁ ca*

kiṁ brahma-janmabhir ananta-kathā-rasasya

“Among all persons on earth, these cowherd women alone have actually perfected their embodied lives, for they have achieved the perfection of unalloyed love for Lord Govinda. Their pure love is hankered after by those who fear material existence, by great sages, and by ourselves as well. For one who has tasted the narrations of the infinite Lord, what is the use of taking birth as a high-class brāhmaṇa, or even as Lord Brahmā himself?” (SB 10.47.58)

nāyaṁ śriyo ’ṅga u nitānta-rateḥ prasādaḥ

svar-yoṣitāṁ nalina-gandha-rucāṁ kuto ’nyāḥ

rāsotsave ’sya bhuja-daṇḍa-gṛhīta-kaṇṭha-

labdhāśiṣāṁ ya udagād vraja-vallabhīnām

“When Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa was dancing with the *gopīs* in the *rāsa-līlā*, the gopīs were embraced by the arms of the Lord. This transcendental favor was never bestowed upon the goddess of fortune or other consorts in the spiritual world. Indeed, never was such a thing even imagined by the most beautiful girls in the heavenly planets, whose bodily luster and aroma resemble the lotus flower. What to speak of worldly women who are very beautiful according to material estimation?” (SB 10.47.60)

āsām aho caraṇa-reṇu-juṣām ahaṁ syāṁ

vṛndāvane kim api gulma-latauṣadhīnām

yā dustyajaṁ sva-janam ārya-pathaṁ ca hitvā

bhejur mukunda-padavīṁ śrutibhir vimṛgyām

“The gopīs of Vṛndāvana have given up the association of their husbands, sons and other family members, who are very difficult to give up, and they have forsaken the path of chastity to take shelter of the lotus feet of Mukunda, Kṛṣṇa, which one should search for by Vedic knowledge. Oh, let me be fortunate enough to be one of the bushes, creepers or herbs in Vṛndāvana, because the *gopīs* trample them and bless them with the dust of their lotus feet.” (SB 10.47.61)

When these manifested forms of Kṛṣṇa's devotees in separation later went to Kurukṣetra and showed themselves to Vasudeva, Devakī, Rukmiṇī and others, they made them also attain this wonder of *mahā-prema*. When Balarāma went to Vraja He also became astonished upon seeing the madness of pure love in the devotees manifesting separation from Kṛṣṇa.

In order to make it known that the *prema* of *gopīs* and the other Vrajavāsīs, which has Kṛṣṇa as its object, is permanent and unchanging, Kṛṣṇa shows the second manifestation of Himself with His devotees in the mood of direct association. Thus by the dual usage of the word *ahanī* (days and nights) in the verse *viśokā ahanī ninyur gāyantyaḥ priya-ceṣṭitam* (SB 10.39.37), the *gopīs* express that they were separated from Kṛṣṇa only for the duration of two days and not longer than that. It should be understood from this that after Kṛṣṇa left for Mathurā, the *gopīs* specifically attained Kṛṣṇa's association by singing about His pastimes for two days. On going to Vraja, Uddhava as well uses the present tense in his statement to Nanda and Yaśodā:

hatvā kaṁsaṁ raṅga-madhye pratīpaṁ sarva-sātvatām

yad āha vaḥ samāgatya kṛṣṇaḥ satyaṁ karoti tat

"Having killed Kaṁsa, the enemy of all the Yadus, in the wrestling arena, Kṛṣṇa will now surely fulfill His promise to you by coming back." (SB 10.46.35) And thus we find in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.46.9-13) when Uddhava first entered Vraja, he saw the forms of the devotees manifesting direct association with Kṛṣṇa. When Uddhava approached Nanda, the cows were mooing loudly with full milk bags and chasing their calves, and the bulls were mooing loudly as they engaged in fighting with each other for enjoying the cows. There was the sound of milking cows and the flute. The cowherd men and women appeared splendid with all their ornaments. As they pulled on the churning ropes with their arms, the women of Vraja shone with the splendor of their jingling bangles and their jewels, which reflected the lamps' light. Their hips, breasts and necklaces moved about, and their faces, anointed with reddish *kuṅkuma*, glowed radiantly with the luster of their earrings reflecting from their cheeks (10.46.45). As the ladies of Vraja loudly sang the glories of lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa, their songs blended with the sound of their churning, ascended to the sky and dissipated all inauspiciousness in every direction (10.46.46). By such statements as these, characterizing the ecstasy of direct association with Kṛṣṇa, we understand the purpose of the second manifestation of Kṛṣṇa and attain scriptural proof of this.

|| 10.45.26 ||

atha śūra-suto rājan putrayoḥ samakārayat

purodhasā brāhmaṇaiś ca yathāvad dvija-saṁskṛtim

TRANSLATION

My dear King, then Vasudeva, the son of Śūrasena, arranged for a priest and other brāhmaṇas to perform his two sons' second-birth initiation.

COMMENTARY

Vasudeva arranged to have the *upanayana saṁskāra* (*brahminical* initiation) performed by Garga Muni (*purodhasā*) and other *brāhmaṇas*.

|| 10.45.27 ||

tebhyo 'dād dakṣiṇā gāvo rukma-mālāḥ sv-alaṅkṛtāḥ

sv-alaṅkṛtebhyaḥ sampūjya sa-vatsāḥ kṣauma-mālinīḥ

TRANSLATION

Vasudeva honored these brāhmaṇas by worshiping them and giving them fine ornaments and well-ornamented cows with their calves. All these cows wore gold necklaces and linen wreaths.

COMMENTARY

The cows wore garlands of linen cloth as well as gold garlands.

|| 10.45.28 ||

yāḥ kṛṣṇa-rāma-janmarkṣe mano-dattā mahā-matiḥ

tāś cādadād anusmṛtya kaṁsenādharmato hṛtāḥ

TRANSLATION

The magnanimous Vasudeva then remembered the cows he had mentally given away on the occasion of Kṛṣṇa's and Balarāma's birth. Kaṁsa had stolen those cows, and Vasudeva now recovered them and gave them away in charity also.

COMMENTARY

At the time of Kṛṣṇa's appearance Vasudeva was locked in the prison of Kaṁsa, who had stolen all of Vasudeva's cows. Still, Vasudeva was so jubilant over Kṛṣṇa's birth that he mentally donated ten thousand of his cows to the *brāhmaṇas*. Now upon Kaṁsa's death,

Vasudeva went to Kaṁsa's *goshala*, took back his cows, and gave ten thousand of them to worthy *brāhmaṇas*.

|| 10.45.29 ||

tataś ca labdha-saṁskārau dvijatvaṁ prāpya su-vratau

gargād yadu-kulācāryād gāyatraṁ vratam āsthitau

TRANSLATION

After attaining twice-born status through initiation, the Lords, sincere in Their vows, took the further vow of celibacy from Garga Muni, the spiritual master of the Yadus.

COMMENTARY

The term *gāyatraṁ vratam* means that Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were following the vow of celibacy in student life (*braḥmacarya*).

|| 10.45.30-31 ||

prabhavau sarva-vidyānāṁ sarva-jñau jagad-īśvarau

nānya-siddhāmalaṁ jñānaṁ gūhamānau narehitaiḥ

atho guru-kule vāsam icchantāv upajagmatuḥ

kāśyaṁ sāndīpaniṁ nāma hy avanti-pura-vāsinam

TRANSLATION

Concealing Their innately perfect knowledge by Their humanlike activities, those two omniscient Lords of the universe, Themselves the origin of all branches of knowledge, next desired to reside at the school of a spiritual master. Thus They approached Sāndīpani Muni, a native of Kāsī living in the city of Avantī.

COMMENTARY

Since Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were covering Their innate (*nānya-siddhā:svābhāvikam*) knowledge by Their human-like behavior, They went to the *gurukula* to acquire knowledge.

|| 10.45.32 ||

yathopasādya tau dāntau gurau vṛttim aninditām

grāhayantāv upetau sma bhaktyā devam ivādṛtau

TRANSLATION

Sāndīpani thought very highly of these two self-controlled disciples, whom he had obtained so fortuitously. By serving him as devotedly as one would serve the Supreme Lord Himself, They showed others an irreproachable example of how to worship the spiritual master.

COMMENTARY

In order to teach others (*grahayantau:sikśayantau*) perfect dealings with the guru, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma served (*vṛttim:upasattim*) the guru with great devotion according to the scriptural rules. They were also respected by the *guru*.

|| 10.45.33 ||

tayor dvija-varas tuṣṭaḥ śuddha-bhāvānuvṛttibhiḥ

provāca vedān akhilān sāṅgopaniṣado guruḥ

TRANSLATION

That best of brāhmaṇas, the spiritual master Sāndīpani, was satisfied with Their submissive behavior, and thus he taught Them the entire Vedas, together with their six corollaries and the Upaniṣads.

|| 10.45.34 ||

sa-rahasyaṁ dhanur-vedaṁ dharmān nyāya-pathāṁs tathā

tathā cānvīkṣikīṁ vidyāṁ rāja-nītiṁ ca ṣaḍ-vidhām

TRANSLATION

He also taught Them the Dhanur-veda, with its most confidential secrets; the standard books of law; the methods of logical reasoning and philosophical debate; and the sixfold science of politics.

COMMENTARY

Sāndīpani Muni taught Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma the confidential portion of the *Dhanur-veda*, military science, which includes knowledge of the appropriate *mantras* and the presiding deities of warfare. *Dharmān* refers to the *Manu-saṁhitā* and other standard lawbooks (*dharma-śāstras*). *Nyāya-pathān* refers to the doctrine of Karma-mīmāṁsā and other such theories. *Ānvīkṣikīm* is knowledge of the techniques of logical argument (*tarka*). The six-fold political science is quite pragmatic and includes (1) *sandhi*, making peace; (2) *vigraha*, war; (3) *yāna*, marching; (4) *āsana*, sitting tight; (5) *dvaidha*, dividing one's forces; and (6) *saṁśaya*, seeking the protection of a more powerful ruler.

|| 10.45.35-36 ||

sarvaṁ nara-vara-śreṣṭhau sarva-vidyā-pravartakau

sakṛn nigada-mātreṇa tau sañjagṛhatur nṛpa

aho-rātraiś catuḥ-ṣaṣṭyā saṁyattau tāvatīḥ kalāḥ

guru-dakṣiṇayācāryaṁ chandayām āsatur nṛpa

TRANSLATION

O King, those best of persons, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, being Themselves the original promulgators of all varieties of knowledge, could immediately assimilate each and every subject after hearing it explained just once. Thus with fixed concentration They learned the sixty-four arts and skills in as many days and nights. Thereafter, O King, They satisfied Their spiritual master by offering him guru-dakṣiṇā.

COMMENTARY

For details of the sixty four arts one should consult the *Tantras*. Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma satisfied (*chandayām āsatuḥ*) their *guru* by inducing him to accept some remuneration, saying "Please take as *dakṣiṇa* something that you desire." According to the *Amara-kosa* dictionary, the word *chanda* means desire or allurement.

|| 10.45.37 ||

dvijas tayos taṁ mahimānam adbhutaṁ saṁlokṣya rājann ati-mānusīṁ matim

sammantrya patnyā sa mahārṇave mṛtaṁ bālaṁ prabhāse varayāṁ babhūva ha

TRANSLATION

O King, the learned brāhmaṇa Sāndīpani carefully considered the two Lords' glorious and amazing qualities and Their superhuman intelligence. Then, after consulting with his wife, he chose as his remuneration the return of his young son, who had died in the ocean at Prabhāsa.

COMMENTARY

The child of the *brāhmaṇa* was swallowed by the conchshell demon while he was playing at Mahā-Śiva-kṣetra, the great pilgrimage place of Lord Śiva [Prabhāsa].

|| 10.45.38 ||

tethety athāruhya mahā-rathau rathaṁ prabhāsam āsādya duranta-vikramau

velām upavrajya niṣīdatuḥ kṣanaṁ sindhur viditvārhanam āharat tayoḥ

TRANSLATION

"So be it," replied those two great charioteers of limitless might, and They at once mounted Their chariot and set off for Prabhāsa. When They reached that place, They walked up to the shore and sat down. In a moment the deity of the ocean, recognizing Them to be the Supreme Lords, approached Them with offerings of tribute.

|| 10.45.39 ||

tam āha bhagavān āśu guru-putraḥ pradīyatām

yo 'sāv iha tvayā grasto bālako mahatormiṇā

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa addressed the lord of the ocean: Let the son of My guru be presented at once—the one you seized here with your mighty waves.

|| 10.45.40 ||

śrī-samudra uvāca

na cāhārṣam ahaṁ deva daityaḥ pañcajano mahān

antar-jala-caraḥ kṛṣṇa śaṅkha-rūpa-dharo ’suraḥ

TRANSLATION

The ocean replied: O Lord Kṛṣṇa, it was not I who abducted him, but a demonic descendant of Diti named Pañcajana, who travels in the water in the form of a conch.

COMMENTARY

The ocean said, “I have not taken the boy. The demon named Pañcajana has taken the boy. He is so powerful I cannot defeat him.”

|| 10.45.41 ||

āste tenāhṛto nūnaṁ tac chrutvā satvaraṁ prabhuḥ

jalam āviśya taṁ hatvā nāpaśyad udare ’rbhakam

TRANSLATION

“Indeed,” the ocean said, “that demon has taken him away.” Hear-ing this, Lord Kṛṣṇa entered the ocean, found Pañcajana and killed him. But the Lord did not find the boy within the demon’s belly.

COMMENTARY

The ocean said, “Pañcajana is present moving about in the water.” Such is the implied completion of the thought.

|| 10.45.42-44 ||

tad-aṅga-prabhavaṁ śaṅkham ādāya ratham āgamat

tataḥ saṁyamanīṁ nāma yamasya dayitāṁ purīm

gatvā janārdanaḥ śaṅkhaṁ pradadhmau sa-halāyudhaḥ

śaṅkha-nirhrādam ākarṇya prajā-saṁyamano yamaḥ

tayoḥ saparyāṁ mahatīṁ cakre bhakty-upabṛṁhitām

uvācāvanataḥ kṛṣṇaṁ sarva-bhūtāśayālayam

līlā-manuṣyayor viṣṇo yuvayoḥ karavāma kim

TRANSLATION

Lord Janārdana took the conchshell that had grown around the demon's body and went back to the chariot. Then He proceeded to Saṁyamanī, the beloved capital of Yamarāja, the lord of death. Upon arriving there with Lord Balarāma, He loudly blew His conchshell, and Yamarāja, who keeps the conditioned souls in check, came as soon as he heard the resounding vibration. Yamarāja elaborately worshiped the two Lords with great devotion, and then he addressed Lord Kṛṣṇa, who lives in everyone's heart: "O Supreme Lord Viṣṇu, what shall I do for You and Lord Balarāma, who are playing the part of ordinary humans?"

COMMENTARY

Though Kṛṣṇa is omniscient, and knew that the boy was not in the ocean, He left Balarāma on the shore along with the chariot, and on the pretext of searching for the boy went into the ocean to reclaim His own conchshell. One should understand that Pañcajana had become a demon in a way similar to that of Jaya and Vijaya. In reality, he was eternally on the spiritual platform as Kṛṣṇa's devotee.

The phrase *tad-aṅga-prabhavaṁ* ("Which had grown from his body") actually means that the conchshell was lying in the demon's stomach according to the Avanti-khaṇḍa of the *Skanda Purāṇa*:

> *tatah pañcajanaṁ hatvā, grāha-rūpaṁ mahāsuram,*
>
> *tan-madhya-sthaṁ sa jagrāha, sankha-grastaṁ hi yat pure*

> "Having killed Pañcajana, the great demon in the form of an aquatic, Kṛṣṇa took the conch which was lying in his belly (*tan madhya stham*)." From this evidence some *ācāryas* explain that the conch was residing within the demon's body, and it merely came out of the demon's body (*tad-aṅga-prabhavaṁ*) when Kṛṣṇa killed him.

Kṛṣṇa loudly blew the conch (*janārdanaḥ saṅkhaṁ pradadhmau*) and all the inhabitants of hell were delivered on hearing the sound. The *Skanda Purāṇa*, Avanti-khaṇḍa, describes the wonderful things that happened when Kṛṣṇa sounded His conchshell:

asipatra-vanaṁ nāma śīrṇa-patram ajāyata

rauravaṁ nāma narakam arauravam abhūt tada

abhairavaṁ bhairavākhyaṁ kumbhī-pākam apācakam

"The hell known as Asipatra-vana lost the sharp, sword-like leaves on its trees, and the hell named Raurava became free of its *ruru* beasts. The Bhairava hell lost its fearfulness, and all cooking stopped in the Kumbhīpāka hell."

The *Skanda Purāṇa* further states, *pāpa-kṣayāt tataḥ sarve vimuktā nārakā narāḥ padam avyayam āsādya*, "All the inhabitants of hell were purified of their sins and attained Vaikuṇṭha in the spiritual world."

For the phrase *līlā-manuṣyayor viṣṇo*, we also have the second reading *līlā-manuṣya he viṣṇo*. The sentence can mean, "What service can I do for You two forms of Viṣṇu playing the roles of humans?" Or "O Viṣṇu who plays the pastimes of a human, what service can I do for You two?"

|| 10.45.45 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

guru-putram ihānītaṁ nija-karma-nibandhanam

ānayasva mahā-rāja mac-chāsana-puraskṛtaḥ

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: Suffering the bondage of his past activity, My spiritual master's son was brought here to you. O great King, obey My command and bring this boy to Me without delay.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, "Though in most cases a person must endure the effects of his past deeds (*nija-karma-nibandhanam:prārabdha*), you should return the son of My guru." According to the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (11.31.12): *martyena yo guru-sutaṁ yama-loka-nītaṁ*: "Śrī

Kṛṣṇa brought the son of His guru back from the planet of the lord of death in the boy's selfsame body." The commentary of Śrīdhara Swāmī also mentions this. Kṛṣṇa said to Yamarāja, "There will be no fault in your giving first priority to My order (*mac-chāsana-puraskṛtaḥ*) and bringing him."

|| 10.45.46 ||

tatheti tenopānītaṁ guru-putraṁ yadūttamau

dattvā sva-gurave bhūyo vṛṇīṣveti tam ūcatuḥ

TRANSLATION

Yamarāja said, "So be it," and brought forth the guru's son. Then those two most exalted Yadus presented the boy to Their spiritual master and said to him, "Please select another boon."

|| 10.45.47 ||

śrī-gurur uvāca

samyak sampādito vatsa bhavadbhyāṁ guru-niṣkrayaḥ

ko nu yuṣmad-vidha-guroḥ kāmānām avaśiṣyate

TRANSLATION

The spiritual master said: My dear boys, You two have completely fulfilled the disciple's obligation to reward his spiritual master. Indeed, with disciples like You, what further desires could a guru have?

COMMENTARY

Sāndīpani Muni said, "What desires remain for the guru with disciples like You?"

|| 10.45.48 ||

gacchataṁ sva-gṛhaṁ vīrau kīrtir vām astu pāvanī

chandāṁsy ayāta-yāmāni bhavantv iha paratra ca

TRANSLATION

O heroes, now please return home. May Your fame sanctify the world, and may the Vedic hymns be ever fresh in Your minds, both in this life and the next.

|| 10.45.49 ||

guruṇaivam anujñātau rathenānila-raṁhasā

āyātau sva-puraṁ tāta parjanya-ninadena vai

TRANSLATION

Thus receiving Their guru's permission to leave, the two Lords returned to Their city on Their chariot, which moved as swiftly as the wind and resounded like a cloud.

|| 10.45.50 ||

samanandan prajāḥ sarvā dṛṣṭvā rāma-janārdanau

apaśyantyo bahv ahāni naṣṭa-labdha-dhanā iva

TRANSLATION

All the citizens rejoiced upon seeing Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, whom they had not seen for many days. The people felt just like those who have lost their wealth and then regained it.

Thus ends the commentary on the Forty Fifth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Forty-six

Uddhava Visits Vṛndāvana

|| 10.46.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

vṛṣṇīnāṁ pravaro mantrī kṛṣṇasya dayitaḥ sakhā

śiṣyo bṛhaspateḥ sākṣād uddhavo buddhi-sattamaḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: The supremely intelligent Uddhava was the best counselor of the Vṛṣṇi dynasty, a beloved friend of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa and a direct disciple of Bṛhaspati.

COMMENTARY

In this chapter Uddhava visits Vraja and observes that which caused great joy (*uddhavam*) for Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, and also the unhappiness (*anuddhavam*) felt by the Vrajavāsīs in separation from Them.

Remembering the sorrow of the Vrajavāsīs who were afflicted with separation from Him, Kṛṣṇa Himself became full of anxiety and reflected, “Who is there in this city of Mathurā qualified to deliver My message, which will relieve their suffering, and make known to

the world the supreme position of the Vrajavāsīs' *prema*? Who is there who has performed thousands of austerities in order to delight in the sweet ocean of the Vrajavāsīs' *prema*?"

The present verse singles out Uddhava, who had by chance just appeared before Kṛṣṇa to render some service, and designates him as the right person to do the needful. *Vṛṣṇīnāṁ pravaro* means that Uddhava was respected by all the members of the Vṛṣṇī clan for his exemplary words and deeds. Thus, when Uddhava returns from Vṛndāvana after experiencing the Vrajavāsīs' *prema*, and tells the Vṛṣṇīs how the *prema* of Nanda and Yaśodā, and the *gopas* and *gopīs* is thousands of times greater even than their own love for Kṛṣṇa, they would believe it, even though they had been thinking that they had the greatest fortune and love for the Lord since He was their own relative, and that the *prema* of Vasudeva and Devakī was the highest, since they have the Lord as their son.

The word *mantrī* indicates that Uddhava was an expert counselor, and therefore would be skilful at consoling the feelings of the Vrajavāsīs. Uddhava was a beloved of Kṛṣṇa (*dayitaḥ:vallabha*), therefore, he was qualified to drink the nectar of the Vrajavāsīs' pure love of God. The word *sakhā* (friend) implies that Uddhava is fluent in discussing conjugal love, just like Subala-sakhā in Vrajabhumi. What was in Uddhava's heart would manifest in his words even more than with Kṛṣṇa. Thus it is stated in the *Bhāgavatam* (3.4.31): *noddhavo 'nv api man-nyūno*, "Uddhava is not even slightly different from Me." Resembling Kṛṣṇa so much, Uddhava was the perfect person to execute the role of Kṛṣṇa's messenger in Vṛndāvana.

That Uddhava is the direct disciple of Bṛhaspati (*siṣyo bṛhaspateḥ sākṣād*) indicates that when Bṛhaspati saw the sharpness of Uddhava's intellect he personally taught him all the *śāstras*. However, the suggestion here is that Uddhava lacked knowledge of one particular *sāstra* which was inaccessible to even Bṛhaspati, namely the topmost knowledge of the science of *prema*, which controls Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself. But because Uddhava is so dear to Kṛṣṇa, certainly the Vraja-gopīs would instruct him in this *sāstra*.

The word *buddhi-sattama* means that Uddhava is so extremely intelligent that he could understand that knowledge of *prema*, which Śrī Kṛṣṇa personally spoke to His chief queens in Dvārakā in the privacy of their personal quarters. The *Bhāgavatam* (10.83.43) describes how the queens of Dvārakā appreciated the depth of the *gopīs*' love:

vraja-striyo yad vāñchanti pulindyas tṛṇa-vīrudhaḥ

gāvaś cārayato gopāḥ pada-sparśaṁ mahātmanaḥ

> “We [Dvārakā queens] desire the same contact with the Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s feet that the young women of Vraja, the cowherd boys and even the aborigine Pulinda women desire—the touch of the dust He leaves on the plants and grass as He tends His cows.”

Śrī *Hari-vaṁsa* states that Uddhava is the son of Vasudeva’s brother Devabhāga: *uddhavo devabhāgasya mahā-bhāgaḥ suto ’bhavat*. In other words, he is Kṛṣṇa’s cousin-brother. In reference to this statement, Nanda addresses Uddhava as *mahā-bhāgaḥ* (greatly fortunate) in verse sixteen of this chapter. The word *uddhava* literally means “a festival of joy.” The words *sākṣād uddhavo* can be taken as one phrase, meaning that Uddhava was actually festivity personified. Thus when the Vrajavāsīs see him they will become blissful.

|| 10.46.2 ||

tam āha bhagavān preṣṭhaṁ bhaktam ekāntinaṁ kvacit

gṛhītvā pāṇinā pāṇiṁ prapannārti-haro hariḥ

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord Hari, who relieves the distress of all who surrender to Him, once took the hand of His fully devoted, dearmost friend Uddhava and addressed him as follows.

COMMENTARY

Uddhava was not only Kṛṣṇa’s devotee but an exclusive devotee (*ekān-tinam*). The quality of the *ekānta-bhakta* is mentioned in this verse:

> *vihāya pitṛ-devādīn, pariniśṭhāṇgato harau*
> *tad-gāḍha-premabhiḥ pūrṇa, ekāntīti nigadyate*

> “He is an *ekānta-bhakta* who gives up father, mother and other attachments, fixes his mind only on Kṛṣṇa and is filled with deep *prema* for the Lord.”

Furthermore, Uddhava is *preṣṭham* (most dear), even among these exclusive devotees, and the object of Kṛṣṇa’s special affection. On one occasion, Kṛṣṇa took Uddhava’s hand (*kvacit gṛhītvā pāṇinā pāṇiṁ*) and spoke to him in a secluded place. This hints at Kṛṣṇa’s own anxiety about the residents of Vraja. Kṛṣṇa takes away the distress (*ārti-haro*) of

anyone who merely surrenders to Him, what to speak of taking away the distress of the Vrajavāsīs, who possessed the topmost form of *kṛṣṇa-prema*.

|| 10.46.3 ||

gacchoddhava vrajaṁ saumya pitror nau prītim āvaha

gopīnāṁ mad-viyogādhiṁ mat-sandeśair vimocaya

TRANSLATION

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] Dear gentle Uddhava, go to Vraja and give pleasure to Our parents. And also relieve the gopīs, suffering in separation from Me, by giving them My message.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said to Uddhava, "Make My father and mother completely happy (*prītim*)." By the word *vimocaya* Kṛṣṇa indicates, "Uddhava, the mental pain of separation from Me is bound within the gopīs' hearts with a strong rope. You can release them from this by My messages, not by your expertise in speech. And it will be done by many messages (*sandeśaiḥ* is plural). It is not one message on *jñāna-yoga* (analysis and detachment), nor after that by two messages containing instructions on how to attain Me and then words of consolation. These messages will simply burn to ashes in the blazing fire of their *prema*. But the gopīs will finally be freed from sorrow by hearing many confidential instructions indirectly spoken, which should be revealed to them and to no one else."

|| 10.46.4 ||

tā man-manaskā mat-prāṇā mat-arthe tyakta-daihikāḥ

mām eva dayitaṁ preṣṭham ātmānaṁ manasā gatāḥ

ye tyakta-loka-dharmāś ca mad-arthe tān bibharmy aham

TRANSLATION

The minds of those gopīs are always absorbed in Me, and their very lives are ever devoted to Me. For My sake they have abandoned everything related to their bodies, renouncing ordinary happiness in this life, as well as religious duties necessary for such happiness in the next life. I alone am their dearmost beloved and, indeed, their very Self. Therefore I take it upon Myself to sustain them in all circumstances.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “The minds (*mat manaskā*) of the Vraja-gopīs are fixed on Me alone. I am their very life (*mat prāṇā*). They have given up (*tyakta*) all bodily connections (*daihikāḥ*) such as husbands, sons, mothers, fathers, eating, drinking and sleeping.”

The reason for all this is stated: “They have understood (*manasā gatāḥ*) that I alone am dear (*dayitam:priyam*) to them, and not any other husband of their own. Not only am I dear but I am the dearest (*preṣṭham*) of all. Not only I am the dearmost, but they think of Me as their very selves and as the Supersoul. Since I, their soul, am living here in Mathurā, they believe that their souls have left their bodies, and only by My inconceivable *yogamāyā* potency are they still living. I sustain the neophyte *sādhakas* who renounce this world and its mundane religiosity for My sake, then what to speak of these *gopīs*?”

|| 10.46.5 ||

mayi tāḥ preyasāṁ preṣṭhe dūra-sthe gokula-striyaḥ

smarantyo ’ṅga vimuhyanti virahautkaṇṭhya-vihvalāḥ

TRANSLATION

My dear Uddhava, for those women of Gokula I am the most cherished object of love. Thus when they remember Me, who am so far away, they are overwhelmed by the anxiety of separation.

COMMENTARY

But, someone may object, “If You are the dearmost to the *gopīs*’ minds and life airs, and their very Self, then why haven’t they come here to Mathurā? How can they stay there in Vraja?” This verse answers the question.

Kṛṣṇa said, “The minds of the women in Gokula are fixed in meditation upon Me in the dress of a cowherd boy, adorned with *guñjā* berries, colored oxides, flute and peacock feathers, and engaged in playing with them in Gokula. Why should they come to Mathurā? Besides, I do not desire to bring them here.”

“Furthermore, whatever is dear to us becomes an object of our possessiveness. Ultimately the dearest object is the soul or our self. Thus things in a favorable relationship to our self also become dear to us, and we try to possess them. Among countless millions of such dear things, I am the dearest of all, even dearer than one’s

own self. The Vraja-gopīs have realized this fact, and thus they have become stunned in separation from Me due their intense love for Me. Although they would have given up their lives, they are being kept alive by My inconceivable potency."

|| 10.46.6 ||

dhārayanty ati-kṛcchreṇa prāyaḥ prāṇān kathañcana

pratyāgamana-sandeśair ballavyo me mad-ātmikāḥ

TRANSLATION

Simply because I have promised to return to them, My fully devoted cowherd girlfriends struggle to maintain their lives somehow or other.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, "With great difficulty the gopīs are somehow maintaining their lives because of My promise to return. It would be much easier to simply give up their lives."

But then, someone may question, "How are the *gopīs* maintaining their lives?"

Kṛṣṇa answers in this verse, "It was by My statement, 'I will quickly return (*pratyāgamana*),' made while leaving Gokula, that the *gopīs* have strong hope that I will return. This is all that is maintaining their life airs, which are about to leave their bodies."

"What is their relation to You?"

This Kṛṣṇa answers with the word *ballavyaḥ*, meaning that, "Even though they are women of the cowherd community, still they belong to Me. Their husbands actually have no contact whatsoever with their supremely attractive qualities of form, taste, fragrance, sound and touch. Rather, their husbands merely presume, 'These are our wives.' In order to nourish the taste of *rasa*, the Vraja-gopīs have always been, from the very beginning, in a self-sustaining conjugal relation with Me as their paramour (*parakīya-bhāva*).

“They are to be enjoyed by Me alone because they are manifestations of My own form (*mad ātmika*) as incarnations of supreme bliss. They are My own internal energy (*svarūpa-śakti*) appearing as the essence of My pleasure potency (*hlādinī-śakti*). Though I am *ātmā-rāma*, I derive more pleasure from them. For this reason I consider them more deserving of My mercy than even My own self.” (The suffix *ka* in *ātmika*, expresses compassion)

Another meaning of *mad-ātmikāḥ*: “These *gopīs* are Mine because they are the objects of My enjoyment. Or the *gopīs*’ very selves are absorbed in Me, in the sense of their always hankering to give pleasure to My mind.”

|| 10.46.7 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

ity ukta uddhavo rājan sandeśaṁ bhartur ādṛtaḥ

ādāya ratham āruhya prayayau nanda-gokulam

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus addressed, O King, Uddhava respectfully accepted his master’s message, mounted his chariot and set off for Nanda-gokula.

|| 10.46.8 ||

prāpto nanda-vrajaṁ śrīmān nimlocati vibhāvasau

channa-yānaḥ praviśatāṁ paśūnāṁ khura-reṇubhiḥ

TRANSLATION

The fortunate Uddhava reached Nanda Mahārāja’s pastures just as the sun was setting, and since the returning cows and other animals were raising dust with their hooves, his chariot passed unnoticed.

COMMENTARY

When Uddhava entered Vraja the sun was setting (*nimlocati*), and his chariot was covered (*channa yānaḥ*) with dust raised by the hooves of the cows.

|| 10.46.9-13 ||

vāsitārthe 'bhiyudhyadbhir nāditaṁ śuśmibhir vṛṣaiḥ
dhāvantībhiś ca vāsrābhir udho-bhāraiḥ sva-vatsakān

itas tato vilaṅghadbhir go-vatsair maṇḍitaṁ sitaiḥ
go-doha-śabdābhiravaṁ veṇūnāṁ niḥsvanena ca

gāyantībhiś ca karmāṇi śubhāni bala-kṛṣṇayoḥ
sv-alaṅkṛtābhir gopībhir gopaiś ca su-virājitam

agny-arkātithi-go-vipra- pitṛ-devārcanānvitaiḥ
dhūpa-dīpaiś ca mālyaiś ca gopāvāsair mano-ramam

sarvataḥ puṣpita-vanaṁ dvijāli-kula-nāditam
haṁsa-kāraṇḍavākīrṇaiḥ padma-ṣaṇḍaiś ca maṇḍitam

TRANSLATION

Gokula resounded on all sides with the sounds of bulls in rut fighting with one another for fertile cows; with the mooing of cows, burdened by their udders, chasing after their calves; with the noise of milking and of the white calves jumping here and there; with the loud reverberation of flute-playing; and with the singing of the all-auspicious deeds of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma by the cowherd men and women, who made the village resplendent with their wonderfully ornamented attire. The cowherds' homes in Gokula appeared most charming with their abundant paraphernalia for worship of the sacrificial fire, the sun, unexpected guests, the cows, the brāhmaṇas, the forefathers and the demigods. On all sides lay the flowering forest, echoing with flocks of birds and swarms of bees and beautified by its lakes crowded with swans, kāraṇḍava ducks and bowers of lotuses.

COMMENTARY

Vraja is described in five verses. Inspired by the desire potency (*icchā-śakti*) of Kṛṣṇa, who thought, "Let Uddhava see the splendor of My Vraja," *yogamāyā* covered the particular manifestation of Vraja, which was merged in grief because of separation from

Kṛṣṇa, and undergoing the *sañcāri-bhāvas* of disinterest (*nirveda*), depression (*visada*) and humility (*dainya*). Instead, *yogamāyā* showed Uddhava a typical evening in Vraja in which Kṛṣṇa was present, charming with the positive sentiments of joy, playfulness, eagerness and enthusiasm.

Because the cows were in heat (*vāsitaḥ*) the bulls were mad, mooing loudly, and fighting with each other to mate with them. Vraja echoed with the sounds of cows running after their new calves. Along with the sound of milking cows there were shouts in all directions such as “Let the cow loose,” “Don’t let the cow loose,” “Bring the cows here,” “Do this quickly,” “Do this slowly,” “Bring this,” “Take this,” “Give this, receive this.” Vraja also appeared splendid on account of the sound of flutes and the singing of the *gopīs*. The performance of sacrifices and worship beautified the homes of the cowherds.

|| 10.46.14 ||

tam āgataṁ samāgamya kṛṣṇasyānucaraṁ priyam

nandaḥ prītaḥ pariṣvajya vāsudeva-dhiyārcayat

TRANSLATION

As soon as Uddhava arrived at Nanda Mahārāja’s home, Nanda came forward to meet him. The cowherd King embraced him in great happiness and worshiped him as nondifferent from Lord Vāsudeva.

COMMENTARY

Then Uddhava approached the home of Nanda, which was filled with misery due to separation from Kṛṣṇa. Uddhava looked just like Nanda’s son Kṛṣṇa and gave pleasure to anyone who saw him. Thus though Nanda was stunned due to separation from Kṛṣṇa, when he saw Uddhava he became aware of external events and eagerly went out to embrace his exalted visitor.

Vāsudeva-dhiyā means that Nanda Mahārāja thought “My worshi-pable Deity, Nārāyaṇa, has come here in the form of this guest.” Thus Nanda worshiped Uddhava with foot wash and other items.

|| 10.46.15 ||

bhojitaṁ paramānnena saṁviṣṭaṁ kaśipau sukham

gata-śramaṁ paryapṛcchat pāda-saṁvāhanādibhiḥ

TRANSLATION

After Uddhava had eaten first-class food, been seated comfortably on a bed and been relieved of his fatigue by a foot massage and other means, Nanda inquired from him as follows.

COMMENTARY

Nanda fed Uddhava sweet rice (*paramānnena*). From the day that Kṛṣṇa departed for Mathurā, all the homes of the Vrajavāsīs were left unswept and dirty, filled with leaves, grass, dust and spider webs. The Vrajavāsīs were kept alive only by the milk, yogurt and buttermilk brought by people from neighboring villages. They simply lamented, "Alas! Alas! We have died."

But on this day, one particular *brāhmaṇa* in Nanda's entourage understood that the King of Vraja was thinking, "Ah, ah, when Uddhava comes to my house today he should not suffer from hunger." Thus that *brāhmaṇa* took some chipped rice and cooked just enough sweet rice to feed one person. Massaging Uddhava's feet was performed by a servant, since Uddhava was Nanda Mahārāja's nephew and therefore an inferior.

|| 10.46.16 ||

kaccid aṅga mahā-bhāga sakhā naḥ śūra-nandanaḥ

āste kuśaly apatyādyair yukto muktaḥ suhṛd-vrataḥ

TRANSLATION

[Nanda Mahārāja said:] My dear most fortunate one, does the son of Śūra fare well, now that he is free and has rejoined his children and other relatives?

COMMENTARY

Fearing that if he asked about Kṛṣṇa, his throat would choke up and tears would come to his eyes, Nanda first asked about the welfare of Vasudeva. Vasudeva was now freed from Kaṁsa's prison and all sorts of dangers.

|| 10.46.17 ||

diṣṭyā kaṁso hataḥ pāpaḥ sānugaḥ svena pāpmanā

sādhūnāṁ dharma-śīlānāṁ yadūnāṁ dveṣṭi yaḥ sadā

TRANSLATION

Fortunately, because of his own sins, the sinful Kaṁsa has been killed, along with all his brothers. He always hated the saintly and righteous Yadus.

|| 10.46.18 ||

api smarati naḥ kṛṣṇo mātaraṁ suhṛdaḥ sakhīn

gopān vrajaṁ cātma-nāthaṁ gāvo vṛndāvanaṁ girim

TRANSLATION

Does Kṛṣṇa remember us? Does He remember His mother and His friends and well-wishers? Does He remember the cowherds and their village of Vraja, of which He is the master? Does He remember the cows, Vṛndāvana forest and Govardhana Hill?

COMMENTARY

Then with tears in his eyes and a choked voice Nanda Mahārāja inquired about Kṛṣṇa. Pointing with his forefinger, he said, “Just see the unfortunate condition of Kṛṣṇa’s mother. Just see how Vraja, whose very soul and master (*ātma-nāthaṁ*) was Kṛṣṇa, is now deprived of a master and devoid of beauty.”

|| 10.46.19 ||

apy āyāsyati govindaḥ sva-janān sakṛd īkṣitum

tarhi drakṣyāma tad-vaktraṁ su-nasaṁ su-smitekṣaṇam

TRANSLATION

Will Govinda return even once to see His family? If He ever does, we may then glance upon His beautiful face, with its beautiful eyes, nose and smile.

COMMENTARY

By saying “Will He come?” (*āyāsyati*) Nanda Mahārāja implies, “O Uddhava, perhaps you know the intention in Kṛṣṇa’s mind?”

Uddhava: “Yes, I am sure Kṛṣṇa will come to console you and stay here again permanently.’’

Nanda Mahārāja: “Forget about Kṛṣṇa’s coming back here to remain permanently. I beg only to see Him. Will Govinda not come just once to see His own family members (*sva-janān*), who are suffering in the blazing fire of separation, and about to die either today or tomorrow? If Govinda does return, then He can receive (*vinda*) and enjoy millions of cows, gold coins, pearls, diamonds and other jewels, silver and gold plates, varieties of garments, ornaments, sandalwood paste, *aguru* scent and *kuṅkuma*, as well as many other household objects. If we two (His parents) die then who else will have a right to all these things? So Kṛṣṇa should come and take them. Certainly a person should reside where the things he desires are found.”

Uddhava: “Why are you talking like this? You should know that Govinda is about to come.”

Intolerant of the delay, Nanda Mahārāja said, “When (*karhi:tarhi*) will I be able to see Kṛṣṇa’s face, which surpasses the beauty of a million moons, and His incomparable nose, nectar sweet smile, and His long, lotus petal eyes? Now that our lives are about to end; may we see Kṛṣṇa just once and then die.” Thus Nanda Mahārāja expresses his extreme anxiety.

|| 10.46.20 ||

dāvāgner vāta-varṣāc ca vṛṣa-sarpāc ca rakṣitāḥ

duratyayebhyo mṛtyubhyaḥ kṛṣṇena su-mahātmanā

TRANSLATION

We were saved from the forest fire, the wind and rain, the bull and serpent demons—from all such insurmountable, deadly dangers—by that very great soul, Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

Uddhava said, “But you will not die. You will live a long time raising your son with affection.”

Nanda Mahārāja replied, “Unlike before, we will not be saved from the hands of death.” In saying this, Nanda recounted the previous threats of death: “Kṛṣṇa saved us from the forest fire and Indra’s torrential rains because of His natural affection (*su-mahātmanā: mahā-sneha-maya*) for us. But why is He not saving us now from the terrible fire separation? I cannot understand this.”

|| 10.46.21 ||

smaratāṁ kṛṣṇa-vīryāṇi līlāpāṅga-nirīkṣitam

hasitaṁ bhāṣitaṁ cāṅga sarvā naḥ śithilāḥ kriyāḥ

TRANSLATION

As we remember the wonderful deeds Kṛṣṇa performed, His playful sidelong glances, His smiles and His words, O Uddhava, we forget all our material engagements.

COMMENTARY

Uddhava said, “Just remembering Kṛṣṇa’s moonlike face produces an intoxicating nectar that removes all kinds of distress.”

Nanda Mahārāja replied, “That is true. But even though recollection of Kṛṣṇa removes all suffering, now because of our ill fortune that remembrance creates more suffering. Whenever we remember Kṛṣṇa, we lose all interest in material activities (*naḥ sithilāḥ kriyāḥ*). Only by the force of habit do we continue to bathe, eat, drink and perform other daily activities. In such a state we cannot remain alive!”

|| 10.46.22 ||

saric-chaila-vanoddeśān mukunda-pada-bhūṣitān

ākrīḍān īkṣyamāṇānāṁ mano yāti tad-ātmatām

TRANSLATION

When we see the places where Mukunda enjoyed His sporting pastimes—the rivers, hills and forests He decorated with His feet—our minds become totally absorbed in Him.

COMMENTARY

"If this is the case, I can understand that by staying in the house you are remembering Kṛṣṇa too much. Therefore to give up dwelling on Him, you should go outside, and wander along the shore of the Yamunā tending your cows."

Anticipating such a suggestion, Nanda Mahārāja explains here how even this would be unfavorable: "On seeing the rivers, forests and other places (*uddeśān*) where Kṛṣṇa performed pastimes, our mind becomes absorbed (*mono tad-ātmatām*) in Kṛṣṇa. Thus we remember Kṛṣṇa more and the pain of separation increases."

|| 10.46.23 ||

manye kṛṣṇaṁ ca rāmaṁ ca prāptāv iha surottamau

surāṇāṁ mahad-arthāya gargasya vacanaṁ yathā

TRANSLATION

In my opinion, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma must be two exalted demigods who have come to this planet to fulfill some great mission of the demigods. Such was foretold by Garga Ṛṣi.

COMMENTARY

By the sudden recollection of Kṛṣṇa as the Lord, in contrast to his natural mood of affection in separation, Nanda speaks with a sense of discrimination in this verse: "It was due to the good fortune of me and of Vasudeva that They became our sons and appeared in my house. Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma have come to benefit the demigods (*surāṇām arthāya*) by killing Kaṁsa and other demons. This is according to the prophetic words of Garga Ṛsi."

|| 10.46.24 ||

kaṁsaṁ nāgāyuta-prāṇaṁ mallau gaja-patiṁ yathā

avadhiṣṭāṁ līlayaiva paśūn iva mṛgādhipaḥ

TRANSLATION

After all, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma killed Kaṁsa, who was as strong as ten thousand elephants, as well as the wrestlers Cāṇūra and Muṣṭika and the elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa. They killed them all sportingly, as easily as a lion disposes of small animals.

|| 10.46.25 ||

tāla-trayaṁ mahā-sāraṁ dhanur yaṣṭim ivebha-rāṭ

babhañjaikena hastena saptāham adadhād girim

TRANSLATION

With the ease of a royal elephant breaking a stick, Kṛṣṇa broke a powerful, giant bow three tālas long. He also held a mountain aloft for seven days with just one hand.

COMMENTARY

Nanda Mahārāja said, "Kṛṣṇa broke a bow three *tālas* long! And with one hand, just His left hand, Kṛṣṇa held up Govardhana Hill for seven days!" A *tāla* "palm tree" is a measurement of ninety feet. Thus the great bow Kṛṣṇa broke was two hundred seventy feet long.

|| 10.46.26 ||

pralambo dhenuko 'riṣṭas tṛṇāvarto bakādayaḥ

daityāḥ surāsura-jito hatā yeneha līlayā

TRANSLATION

Here in Vṛndāvana, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma easily destroyed demons like Pralamba, Dhenuka, Arista, Tṛṇāvarta and Baka, who had themselves defeated both demigods and other demons.

|| 10.46.27 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

iti saṁsmṛtya saṁsmṛtya nandaḥ kṛṣṇānurakta-dhīḥ

aty-utkaṇṭho 'bhavat tūṣṇīṁ prema-prasara-vihvalaḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus intensely remembering Kṛṣṇa again and again, Nanda Mahārāja, his mind completely attached to the Lord, felt extreme anxiety and fell silent, overcome by the strength of his love.

COMMENTARY

Becoming completely attached to Kṛṣṇa by remembering the Lord's majesty (*aiśvarya*), Nanda Mahārāja thought, "Oh, by misfortune, I have been separated from my son, who is the ocean of powerful qualities!" Nanda's attachment to Kṛṣṇa was such that even in appreciating Kṛṣṇa's great powers as the Lord, his personal relationship with Kṛṣṇa did not weaken as it did with Vasudeva. Nanda's mind remained attached to Kṛṣṇa with undiminished firmness. With his mind attracted to Kṛṣṇa in this way Nanda Mahārāja became overcome by the sway of paternal affection (*prema-prasara-vihvalaḥ*). In the presence of the supreme *prema* of Nanda, who like Agastya, swallowed the whole ocean, what is the significance of a whole ocean of opulences (*aiśvarya*)?

|| 10.46.28 ||

yaśodā varṇyamānāni putrasya caritāni ca

śṛṇvanty aśrūṇy avāsrākṣīt sneha-snuta-payodharā

TRANSLATION

As mother Yaśodā heard the descriptions of her son's activities, she poured out her tears, and milk flowed from her breasts out of love.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa's father Nanda Mahārāja, having thus controlled himself by the strength of his gravity, was now able to honor Uddhava properly as guest, to look at him directly, to recognize him, inquire about his well-being, and to speak about Kṛṣṇa's godly qualities.

Kṛṣṇa's mother Yaśodā, however, who was drowning in the whirlpools of the ocean of unsteadiness, could not offer any hospitality to Uddhava. This is expressed in this verse. From the very day that Kṛṣṇa had left for Mathurā, tears fell continuously from Yaśodā's eyes and milk dripped from her breasts. Even though she was being counseled by hundreds of women and men, Yaśodā would just say, "I don't want to see anything except the face of my son." At every moment, Yaśodā kept her eyes closed and cried constantly drenching her clothing. Thus she could not recognize Uddhava, treat him with parental affection, ask him any questions or give him any message for her son. Her breasts (*payodharā*) flowed profusely with milk out of affection for her son. *Payodharā* also means cloud. Yaśodā was like a cloud showering the rain of tears and milk.

|| 10.46.29 ||

tayor itthaṁ bhagavati kṛṣṇe nanda-yaśodayoḥ

vīkṣyānurāgaṁ paramaṁ nandam āhoddhavo mudā

TRANSLATION

Uddhava then joyfully addressed Nanda Mahārāja, having clearly seen the supreme loving attraction he and Yaśodā felt for Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

COMMENTARY

Although Uddhava was already familiar with high levels of *prema*, now he clearly observed (*vīksya*) Nanda and Yaśodā's intense loving attraction for Kṛṣṇa. Seeing that both in quantity and quality their love was superior to that of Vasudeva and Devakī, Uddhava became filled with bliss and thought, "Now my life has become successful, having seen such love." Thus Uddhava was joyful even at seeing their anguish, which was actually another form of loving ecstasy.

|| 10.46.30 ||

śrī-uddhava uvāca

yuvāṁ ślāghyatamau nūnaṁ dehinām iha māna-da

nārāyaṇe 'khila-gurau yat kṛtā matir īdṛśī

TRANSLATION

Śrī Uddhava said: O respectful Nanda, certainly you and mother Yaśodā are the most praiseworthy persons in the entire world, since you have developed such a loving attitude toward Lord Nārāyaṇa, the spiritual master of all living beings.

COMMENTARY

Uddhava said, "Among all praiseworthy devotees in this world, Vasudeva and Devakī are especially so, but you two are most praiseworthy because of the superiority of your *prema*." Nanda already said in verse twenty-three that he knew that Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were gods. Knowing that Nanda appreciated Kṛṣṇa's lordly aspect, Uddhava describes Kṛṣṇa in this verse as Nārāyaṇa, the guru of everyone. He does this to emphasize Kṛṣṇa's power, and to sympathize with Nanda and Yaśodā's sentiments.

|| 10.46.31 ||

etau hi viśvasya ca bīja-yonī rāmo mukundaḥ puruṣaḥ pradhānam

anvīya bhūteṣu vilakṣaṇasya jñānasya ceśāta imau purāṇau

TRANSLATION

These two Lords, Mukunda and Balarāma, are each the seed and womb of the universe, the creator and His creative potency. They enter the hearts of living beings and control their conditioned awareness. They are the primeval Supreme.

COMMENTARY

In this verse Uddhava describes how Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma are Nārāyaṇa and the spiritual masters of everyone. As the Lord (aṁśī) and His expansions (*aṁśa*) are nondifferent, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma (*etau*), though appearing as two entities, are actually one. This is confirmed by Akrūra who said, *bahu-mūrty-eka-mūrtikam*, "Kṛṣṇa, though of one form, appears as many."(SB 10.40.7)

Uddhava said, "Both of Them are the seed and the womb of the universe, both of Them assume the forms of the immediate and ingredient cause, and both are the *puruṣa* and the *pradhāna*, since the potency and the potent are essentially one."

This is as stated in the (SB 11.24.19):

prakṛtir yasyopādānam ādhāraḥ puruṣaḥ paraḥ

sato 'bhivyañjakaḥ kālo brahma tat tritayaṁ tv aham

"The material universe may be considered real, having nature as its original ingredient and final state. Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu is the resting place of nature, which becomes manifest by the power of time. Thus nature, the almighty Viṣṇu and time are not different from Me, the Supreme Absolute Truth."

Uddhava said, "Entering as the indwelling Supersoul within all beings, They control the living entity, whose knowledge is separate. They mercifully grant knowledge of the Personality of Godhead (*bhagavān*) to the devotees and knowledge of Brahman (*vilakṣaṇasya-jñānasya*) to the *jñānis*."

This point is confirmed in the Bhagavad-gītā (10.10):

teṣām satata-yuktānām, bhajatāṁ prīti-pūrvakam,

dadāmi buddhi-yogaṁ taṁ, yena mām upayānti te

"To those who are constantly devoted to serving Me with love, I give the understanding by which they can come to Me."

And in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (8.24.38):

madīyaṁ mahimānaṁ ca paraṁ brahmeti śabditam

vetsyasy anugṛhītaṁ me sampraśnair vivṛtaṁ hṛdi

"You will be thoroughly advised and favored by Me, and because of your inquiries, everything about My glories, which are known as *paraṁ brahma*, will be manifest within your heart. Thus you will know everything about Me."

The word ca implies that Kṛṣṇa also gives mundane knowledge of how to attain heaven (Svargaloka), and other material destinations to the *karmīs*.

|| 10.46.32-33 ||

yasmin janaḥ prāṇa-viyoga-kāle kṣanaṁ samāveśya mano ’viśuddham

nirhṛtya karmāśayam āśu yāti parāṁ gatiṁ brahma-mayo ’rka-varṇaḥ

tasmin bhavantāv akhilātma-hetau nārāyaṇe kāraṇa-martya-mūrtau

bhāvaṁ vidhattāṁ nitarāṁ mahātman kiṁ vāvaśiṣṭaṁ yuvayoḥ su-kṛtyam

TRANSLATION

Anyone, even a person in an impure state, who absorbs his mind in Him for just a moment at the time of death burns up all traces of sinful reactions and immediately attains the supreme transcendental destination in a pure, spiritual form as effulgent as the sun. You two have rendered exceptional loving service to Him, Lord Nārāyaṇa, the Supersoul of all and the cause of all existence, the great soul who, although the original cause of everything, has a humanlike form. What pious deeds could still be required of you?

COMMENTARY

Uddhava said, “After burning up (*nirhṛtya*) all traces of *karma*, one goes to Vaikuṇṭha (*parāṁ gatim*) in a pure spiritual body (*brahma-mayaḥ*), bright as the sun (*arka-varṇaḥ*). You two have rendered devotion to Nārāyaṇa, who is the soul of all and the cause of all causes, even though He appeared in the form of a human. For you, therefore, what activities remain to be done?”

The word *su-kṛtyam* (required pious activity) indicates that for Nanda and Yaśodā nothing remains to be done. But for Kṛṣṇa there remains the work of consoling and pacifying them, and being obedient to them.

|| 10.46.34 ||

āgamiṣyaty adīrgheṇa kālena vrajam acyutaḥ

priyaṁ vidhāsyate pitror bhagavān sātvatāṁ patiḥ

TRANSLATION

Infallible Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the devotees, will soon return to Vraja to satisfy His parents.

COMMENTARY

"Our dear child Uddhava! I have heard that you are very intelligent, but now I see that you are actually foolish because you are praising us. Alas, alas, who else would let such a wonderful son full of good qualities leave His home and go elsewhere? Who is there in the three worlds more unfortunate, degraded and miserable than us? We are to be condemned by everyone!"

Anticipating this statement, Uddhava speaks consolingly in this verse. Uddhava said, "Acyuta (one who never falls or breaks His promise), will come very soon to Vraja. Acting as the master and protector of the Yadus (*sātvatāṁ patiḥ*), Kṛṣṇa will stay here and fulfill (*priyam:mano-bhīṣṭam*) all of your desires."

|| 10.46.35 ||

hatvā kaṁsaṁ raṅga-madhye pratīpaṁ sarva-sātvatām

yad āha vaḥ samāgatya kṛṣṇaḥ satyaṁ karoti tat

TRANSLATION

Having killed Kaṁsa, the enemy of all the Yadus, in the wrestling arena, Kṛṣṇa will now surely fulfill His promise to you by coming back.

COMMENTARY

"After killing Kaṁsa and meeting you at the edge of Mathurā, Kṛṣṇa said, 'You return to Vraja and We will also quickly come there,' (10.45.23) Kṛṣṇa is certainly doing (*karoti*) that."

The present tense (*karoti*) is used to indicate that Kṛṣṇa is fulfilling His promise at this very moment. In fact, in another manifestation Kṛṣṇa was actually present in Vraja at that moment, being attentively cared for by Nanda and Yaśodā, though unseen by Uddhava. By the influence of Vāg-devī (Sarasvatī) Uddhava's words were actually true.

|| 10.46.36 ||

mā khidyataṁ mahā-bhāgau drakṣyathaḥ kṛṣṇam antike

antar hṛdi sa bhūtānām āste jyotir ivaidhasi

TRANSLATION

O most fortunate ones, do not lament. You will see Kṛṣṇa again very soon. He is present in the hearts of all living beings, just as fire lies dormant in wood.

COMMENTARY

Nanda Mahārāja said, “Oh, how great is our misfortune that our son, who would never abandon us and always tells the truth, is delayed in returning to Vraja.” Uddhava speaks this verse to console Kṛṣṇa’s lamenting parents.

Uddhava said, “You should not lament. Very soon you will be able to see Kṛṣṇa.”

Nanda said, “You say we will see Kṛṣṇa but when will that be, tomorrow, the next day or ten days from now? With some consola-tion we will keep our life airs from leaving our bodies till that day. But if Kṛṣṇa is not coming, you should tell us truthfully. Let our life airs leave us, for we cannot stand the pain of repressing them.”

Hearing Nanda speak like this, Uddhava considered, “Alas, what advice can I give them? If they were suffering in separation from an ordinary, mundane son I could enlighten them by saying: ‘Why are you immersed in the illusion of family attachment like this? False attachment to wife and sons is a cause of trouble. Give that up and attach yourself to the Lord.’”

“But how can I give this advice to Nanda, who is attached to Kṛṣṇa as his son? He is not like Vasudeva who, on seeing the godly powers of Kṛṣṇa, weakened his attachment to Kṛṣṇa as his son. Rather, by seeing Kṛṣṇa’s majestic powers Nanda and Yaśodā’s attachment to their son becomes even stronger and they think: ‘Alas, even the parents of an ordinary son die out of misery if they can no longer see him playing in their house. By our good fortune the Lord Himself played about in our house as our son. We lament bitterly if we cannot coddle Kṛṣṇa for even a moment. How will we live without seeing that child in our home? We are most unfortunate, having been separated from such a child.’”

“But on the other hand, upon realizing the godly powers of Kṛṣṇa, Vasudeva and Devakī think: ‘Kṛṣṇa is the worshipable Lord; He is not our son.’ Thus they refrain from embracing and fondling Him. Not only is the knot of possessiveness tied tightly for Nanda and Yaśodā, but Kṛṣṇa has strong possessiveness of them as well, even though

He is the Supreme Lord." I have seen Kṛṣṇa's concern for their sake when He said, 'Go to Vraja and make My father and mother happy. And remove the pain of separation from the Vraja-gopīs by giving them news about Me.' (SB 10.46.3) I also recall the words of the cowherd men which I previously heard:

> *dustyajaś cānurāgo 'smin sarveṣāṁ no vrajaukasām*
>
> *nanda te tanaye 'smāsu tasyāpy autpattikaḥ katham*
>
> 'Dear Nanda, how is it that we and all the other residents of Vraja cannot give up our constant affection for your son? And how is it that He is so spontaneously attracted to us?' (SB 10.26.13)

"But if I go to Mathurā and bring Kṛṣṇa here tomorrow, Jarāsandha, angered over Kaṁsa's wives becoming widows, will come and destroy Mathurā. Who then will protect Vasudeva and the other Yādavas? If Kṛṣṇa leaves Vraja again and goes to Mathurā to protect them, however, then the Vrajavāsīs will certainly die. If I tell the Vrajavāsīs that Kṛṣṇa will come in four or five years, it will be very hard for them to hold on for that long. If I lie, telling them that Kṛṣṇa will come after four or five days, when the time expires and they discover I lied, they will also die."

"Alas! As there is no other means, I will now weaken their *prema* by discoursing on spiritual knowledge. I will tell them that as the Supersoul, Kṛṣṇa is indifferent to everything, and as the formless, impersonal Brahman Kṛṣṇa has no relationships with birth, father, mother, material activities or the material body. To realize all this I will teach them how to meditate on the soul. However, if Nanda and Yaśodā's unlimited and unfathomable pure love for Kṛṣṇa not only remains unchecked but rather increases after hearing my discourse, then I will return to Mathurā and simply glorify their incomparable *prema* again and again in the grand assembly of Kṛṣṇa, Vasudeva, Ugrasena and the others." Having decided thus, Uddhava meditated on Kṛṣṇa and spoke about Kṛṣṇa as the Supersoul.

Uddhava said, "As fire lies dormant within wood, Kṛṣṇa is present within the hearts of all living beings. Just as the fire within wood is not visible without friction, similarly, Kṛṣṇa is not visible without devotion."

Hearing this, Nanda and Yaśodā thought, "Uddhava is telling us if we do not perform devotional activities as the Vaiṣṇavas do for Kṛṣṇa, our son, why should He appear in

our house? If that is the case, we must perform devotional service for our son, so that somehow or other He will appear in our house."

After Uddhava returned to Mathurā, Nanda and the cowherd men, their eyes brimming with tears, said:

manaso vṛttayo naḥ syuḥ kṛṣṇa pādāmbujāśrayāḥ

vāco 'bhidhāyinīr nāmnāṁ kāyas tat-prahvaṇādiṣu

"O fortunate one, may our minds rest on Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, may our voices always sing His names, and may our bodies offer Him respects." (SB 10.47.66)

|| 10.46.37 ||

na hy asyāsti priyaḥ kaścin nāpriyo vāsty amāninaḥ

nottamo nādhamo vāpi sa-mānasyāsamo 'pi vā

TRANSLATION

For Him no one is especially dear or despicable, superior or inferior, and yet He is not indifferent to anyone. He is free from all desire for respect and yet gives respect to all others.

COMMENTARY

Noticing that Nanda and Yaśodā's *prema* did not diminish after his explanation, Uddhava said, "My dear King of Vraja, Kṛṣṇa is directly the Supreme Absolute Truth, Parabrahman. He is free from the desire for respect and also gives respect to others. No one is dear to Brahman because Brahman has no false identity and is equal to all." Uddhava explained these points in three verses (37-39).

|| 10.46.38 ||

na mātā na pitā tasya na bhāryā na sutādayaḥ

nātmīyo na paraś cāpi na deho janma eva ca

TRANSLATION

He has no mother, no father, no wife, children or other relatives. No one is related to Him, and yet no one is a stranger to Him. He has no material body and no birth.

COMMENTARY

The direct meaning of the verses which Uddhava revealed to Nanda is obvious. There is a hidden meaning as well.

|| 10.46.39 ||

na cāsya karma vā loke sad-asan-miśra-yoniṣu

krīḍārthaṁ so 'pi sādhūnāṁ paritrāṇāya kalpate

TRANSLATION

He has no work to do in this world that would oblige Him to take birth in pure, impure or mixed species of life. Yet to enjoy His pastimes and deliver His saintly devotees, He manifests Himself.

COMMENTARY

Uddhava said, "That Brahman does not take birth in wombs of goodness, passion or ignorance, because it is without birth, and it has no *karma* nor a material body. Consequently it does not have material activities or material goals. Kṛṣṇa, however, takes birth from those whose natures are purely spiritual, beyond the material modes, such as Yaśodā, Devakī and Kauśalya. Afterwards, He appears with a body, has a mother and father, performs activities, fulfills responsibilities and has goals."

However, Uddhava did not want to directly reveal this to Nanda, so he concealed it by saying, "Though Kṛṣṇa is the original form of Brahman, out of His own compassion, He appears in a way suitable to deliver His devotees from suffering."

|| 10.46.40 ||

sattvaṁ rajas tama iti bhajate nirguṇo guṇān

krīḍann atīto 'pi guṇaiḥ sṛjaty avan hanty ajaḥ

TRANSLATION

Although beyond the three modes of material nature—goodness, passion and ignorance—the transcendental Lord accepts association with them as His play. Thus the unborn Supreme Lord utilizes the material modes to create, maintain and destroy.

COMMENTARY

Nanda Mahārāja said, “It may be questioned if Kṛṣṇa is equal to all, and no one is dear or not dear to Him, then why does He make some people happy in this world and others unhappy?”

Uddhava said, “The answer is that happiness and distress are produced by the modes of material nature, not by Kṛṣṇa.” That is the intention of this verse. Even though Kṛṣṇa is beyond the material modes of nature (*nirguṇa*), by glancing at His *māyā-śakti* (material energy) He accepts *sattva, raja* and *tama guṇas*.”

Nanda Mahārāja: “For what purpose?”

Uddhava: “For the purpose of playing, even though Kṛṣṇa is transcendental, beyond play.” By this Uddhava intended to make Nanda Mahārāja understand that Kṛṣṇa does not even play.

Uddhava: “In truth, however, even though Kṛṣṇa is transcendental, He appears within this world of illusion as Kṛṣṇa and Rāma to enjoy pastimes with His devotees. Although Kṛṣṇa transcends the modes, He uses the modes to create the universe, so that the *jīvas* from the previous day of Brahmā can reap the fruits of their good and bad *karma* and thus enjoy and suffer. What fault is there in Kṛṣṇa for this?”

|| 10.46.41 ||

yathā bhramarikā-dṛṣṭyā bhrāmyatīva mahīyate

citte kartari tatrātmā kartevāhaṁ-dhiyā smṛtaḥ

TRANSLATION

Just as a person who is whirling around perceives the ground to be turning, one who is affected by false ego thinks himself the doer, when actually only his mind is acting.

COMMENTARY

Uddhava said, “Actually Kṛṣṇa is not the creator of the universe either, since even that is executed by the modes of nature. Due to a defect in the bodily functions, a person may perceive that the earth is turning around (*bhramarikā*) like a potter’s wheel. Similarly, though the mind is the doer, the living entity perceives the soul as the doer due to identification with the mind. In the same way, the living entity perceives the universe as the creation of the Lord, though it is actually the creation of the modes of nature (*guṇas*). It should be understood however, that though the material universe is not a direct creation of Kṛṣṇa, it is a creation of Kṛṣṇa’s *māyā-śakti*, coming from the Lord. As Kṛṣṇa and His energy are nondifferent, one can say that the Lord in the form of His *māyā-śakti* creates the world.”

|| 10.46.42 ||

yuvayor eva naivāyam ātmajo bhagavān hariḥ

sarveṣām ātmajo hy ātmā pitā mātā sa īśvaraḥ

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord Hari is certainly not your son alone. Rather, being the Lord, He is the son, Soul, father and mother of everyone.

COMMENTARY

Uddhava said, “You should not think of the creator of the whole universe as your son, or the source of your happiness and suffering. Though Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Lord, if you still think of Him as your son, then listen as I speak the truth.” Then Uddhava speaks this verse: “Kṛṣṇa is not just your son, but whoever cultivates a sentiment for Him as their son will have Him as a son. Anyone who thinks of Kṛṣṇa as the most beloved of their souls (*ātma-preṣṭha*) will achieve Him as their dear most. For those who think of Kṛṣṇa as father, He is their father. Because Kṛṣṇa is the controller (*īśvaraḥ*) nothing is impossible for Him.”

|| 10.46.43 ||

dṛṣṭaṁ śrutaṁ bhūta-bhavad-bhaviṣyat sthāsnuś cariṣṇur mahad alpakaṁ ca

vinācyutād vastu tarāṁ na vācyaṁ sa eva sarvaṁ paramātma-bhūtaḥ

TRANSLATION

Nothing can be said to exist independent of Lord Acyuta—nothing heard or seen, nothing in the past, present or future, nothing moving or unmoving, great or small. He indeed is everything, for He is the Supreme Soul.

COMMENTARY

Uddhava said, “Actually, O King of Vraja, you should know that since the whole universe is created by Kṛṣṇa’s energy, it is nondifferent from Him. Therefore, you should bear this in mind whenever you speak about Him. There is nothing in this universe that can be said to exist independently of Lord Acyuta.”

|| 10.46.44 ||

evaṁ niśā sā bruvator vyatītā nandasya kṛṣṇānucarasya rājan

gopyaḥ samutthāya nirūpya dīpān vāstūn samabhyarcya daudhīny amanthun

TRANSLATION

While Kṛṣṇa’s messenger continued speaking with Nanda, the night ended, O King. The women of the cowherd village rose from bed and, lighting lamps, worshiped their household deities. Then they began churning the yogurt into butter.

COMMENTARY

Though the entire night passed in discussion, Uddhava could not pacify Nanda and Yaśodā nor get them to accept his advice. Then Nanda considered things in this way: “Uddhava wants to enlighten us by saying that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Lord. Do we not know that? At Kṛṣṇa’s name-giving ceremony I heard Garga Muni say, ‘Your son will be equal to Nārāyaṇa in qualities.’ Indeed who else is there more equal to Nārāyaṇa than Kṛṣṇa? Therefore from Garga we learned that our son is Nārāyaṇa. Besides that, we also personally experienced our son to be Nārāyaṇa when He killed Pūtanā, Agha and Baka, lifted Govardhana Hill, stopped the forest fire, and made the ruler of Varuṇaloka offer respects. Certainly I realize that Kṛṣṇa is Nārāyaṇa, the Supersoul and the Supreme Brahman. Nevertheless, nothing inhibits me from thinking of Kṛṣṇa as our son. The proof is Garga’s words: *tasmān nandātmajo ‘yaṁ te*. “O Nanda, this son of yours.” (SB 10.8.19)

“Even though Kṛṣṇa may be the Supreme Lord, we do not think of Him as an object of worship. We simply think of Kṛṣṇa as our son, and find satisfaction by offering Him the remnants of our chewed betel-nut. If He were not our son, our minds would not be satisfied. Before Kṛṣṇa’s birth we could meditate on Nārāyaṇa, our family deity. But now, as soon as we meditate on Nārāyaṇa, Nārāyaṇa appears directly in front of us. This

is a sign of the satisfaction in our minds. Therefore acting like this in relation to our son is not a fault. We are certainly Kṛṣṇa's mother and father."

"Further, Kṛṣṇa's own realization in this matter is also proof that we two are His parents. We have seen many times that His face becomes sad if we don't pamper Him by offering Him the remnants of our chewed betel-nut, lift Him on our laps, embrace Him, kiss Him and so forth."

"If Yaśodā were not His mother, how could she tie him up when He broke the yogurt pots? Seeing Him unhappy on being tied up, I freed Him and He smiled with happiness. Because we are His parents, Kṛṣṇa accepts our scolding, commands, and even our tying Him up though He may be the Supreme Lord. If it was not a fact that we are Kṛṣṇa's parents then how could the Supreme Personality, the all-pervading Absolute, become bound up by us?"

"But now, after Kṛṣṇa has killed Cāṇūra, Kaṁsa and others in Mathurā, everyone is telling Him, 'O Kṛṣṇa, You are certainly the Supreme Lord!' Moreover, Devakī tells Kṛṣṇa, 'I am Your mother,' Vasudeva tells Him, 'I am Your father,' others say, 'We are Your paternal uncles,' and yet others tell Kṛṣṇa that they are His brothers, relatives and friends. Whenever they try to bring Kṛṣṇa to their various houses by inviting Him there, they simply prolong His stay in Mathurā. Then our son, the crest jewel of proper conduct, looks at their faces and falls further into a terrible trap."

"Being incapable of returning to His Vraja because of His benevolent nature, I suppose Kṛṣṇa told everyone: 'Indeed, I am the Supreme Lord, the creator of the universe. Who can be My mother, who can be My father, and who can be My relative? Just look in all the scriptures and you will see that I belong only to that person who renders devotional service to Me and no one else. Only to his house will I go, and he alone is My father and other relations.'"

Nanda Mahārāja continued to contemplate, "But this Uddhava is simply a child, even though he may be very intelligent. He cannot fathom the depths of my son's heart. Taking the literal meaning of Kṛṣṇa's words as if they were Kṛṣṇa's real thoughts, Uddhava has come from Mathurā and given us this advice. But my son has cleverly spoken quite correctly that 'He who renders devotion to Me is My father and in his house I reside.'"

“Therefore I am sending this message with Uddhava to Kṛṣṇa: ‘My dear Kṛṣṇa, I have devotion for Your lotus feet. Be merciful and be pleased with me, so that I can attain You by the devotional processes of hearing and chanting about You, remembering You and offering obeisances unto You.’ Receiving this message, my son will announce in the assembly of the Yādavas, ‘O men of the Yadu dynasty, You could not exhibit devotion to Me in this place, but Nanda Mahārāja is doing so. Therefore Nanda Mahārāja is My real father, friend and beloved. I am going to his house.’ Saying this Kṛṣṇa will come here at once.”

At last, Nanda Mahārāja forgot all these deliberations and did not send any message to Kṛṣṇa, due to the influence of the *sañcāri-bhāva* of humility (*dainya*). Now, to continue the text: Rising during the *brāhma-muhūrta* period, the Vraja-gopīs lit lamps and worshiped the entrances (*vāstūn samabhyarcya*) of their homes, churned yogurt and performed other domestic duties.

|| 10.46.45 ||

tā dīpa-dīptair maṇibhir virejū rajjūr vikarṣad-bhuja-kaṅkaṇa-srajaḥ

calan-nitamba-stana-hāra-kuṇḍala-tviṣat-kapolāruṇa-kuṅkumānanāḥ

TRANSLATION

As they pulled on the churning ropes with their bangled arms, the women of Vraja shone with the splendor of their jewels, which reflected the lamps’ light. Their hips, breasts and necklaces moved about, and their faces, anointed with reddish kuṅkuma, glowed radiantly with the luster of their earrings reflecting from their cheeks.

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs*’ gem studded armlets, anklets and rows of bangles glittered in the lamp light. As they pulled the churning ropes their breasts, hips and necklaces trembled. Their jeweled earrings lit up their cheeks, and their faces shone with *kuṅkuma* from the province of Bāhlika.

|| 10.46.46 ||

udgāyatīnām aravinda-locanaṁ vrajāṅganānāṁ divam aspṛśad dhvaniḥ

dadhnaś ca nirmanthana-śabda-miśrito nirasyate yena diśām amaṅgalam

TRANSLATION

As the ladies of Vraja loudly sang the glories of lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa, their songs blended with the sound of their churning, ascended to the sky and dissipated all inauspiciousness in every direction.

COMMENTARY

The word *udgāyatīnām* (loudly singing) indicates that the gopīs were absorbed in thinking of lotus-eyed (*aravinda-locanaṁ*) Kṛṣṇa and feeling His presence. Thus they sang loudly in great bliss. Dressing nicely with colorful clothing and ornaments, smearing *kuṅkuma* on oneself, and singing sweetly do not occur in the state of separation and lamentation. Therefore it is understood that at the end of night Uddhava was seeing the manifestation of Vraja with Kṛṣṇa present there, just as he had seen at the end of the previous day upon arriving in Vraja.

|| 10.46.47 ||

bhagavaty udite sūrye nanda-dvāri vrajaukasaḥ

dṛṣṭvā rathaṁ śātakaumbhaṁ kasyāyam iti cābruvan

TRANSLATION

When the godly sun had risen, the people of Vraja noticed the golden chariot in front of Nanda Mahārāja's doorway. "Who does this belong to?" they asked.

COMMENTARY

Vraja-okasaḥ (residents of Vraja) refers to the *gopīs* who were feeling separation upon seeing the chariot of Uddhava. Here the mani-festation of Vraja in separation from Kṛṣṇa again appears.

|| 10.46.48 ||

akrūra āgataḥ kiṁ vā yaḥ kaṁsasyārtha-sādhakaḥ

yena nīto madhu-purīṁ kṛṣṇaḥ kamala-locanaḥ

TRANSLATION

“Perhaps Akrūra has returned—he who fulfilled Kaṁsa’s desire by taking lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa to Mathurā.”

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs* angrily said, “Perhaps Akrūra, who took Kṛṣṇa to Mathurā to fulfill the purposes of Kaṁsa, has returned to Vraja.”

|| 10.46.49 ||

kiṁ sādhayiṣyaty asmābhir bhartuḥ prītasya niṣkṛtim

tataḥ strīṇāṁ vadantīnām uddhavo ’gāt kṛtāhnikaḥ

TRANSLATION

“Is he going to use our flesh to offer funeral oblations for his master, who was so satisfied with his service?” As the women were speaking in this way, Uddhava appeared, having finished his early-morning duties.

COMMENTARY

“For what purpose has Akrūra come again, now that Kaṁsa has been killed?” Considering this, the *gopīs* propose a reason in this verse. “Is he going to perform the funeral rites of his master Kaṁsa, who was pleased (*prītasya*) with his work of taking Kṛṣṇa away from Vraja, by using our flesh as an offering to him?” As the *gopīs* were speaking like this, Uddhava approached. Sometimes the word *pretasya* (dead Kaṁsa) is seen instead of *prītasya* (satisfied Kaṁsa).

Thus ends the commentary on the Forty Sixth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Forty-seven

The Song of the Bee (Bhramara-gītā)

|| 10.47.1-2 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

taṁ vīkṣya kṛṣānucaraṁ vraja-striyaḥ pralamba-bāhuṁ nava-kañja-locanam

pītāmbaraṁ puṣkara-mālinaṁ lasan-mukhāravindaṁ parimṛṣṭa-kuṇḍalam

su-vismitāḥ ko ’yam apīvya-darśanaḥ kutaś ca kasyācyuta-veṣa-bhūṣaṇaḥ

iti sma sarvāḥ parivavrur utsukās tam uttamaḥ-śloka-padāmbujāśrayam

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: The young women of Vraja became astonished upon seeing Lord Kṛṣṇa’s servant, who had long arms, whose eyes resembled a newly grown lotus, who wore a yellow garment and a lotus garland, and whose lotuslike face glowed with brightly polished earrings. “Who is this handsome man?” the gopīs asked. “Where has he come from, and whom does he serve? He’s wearing Kṛṣṇa’s clothes and ornaments!” Saying this, the gopīs eagerly crowded around Uddhava, whose shelter was the lotus feet of Lord Uttamaḥśloka, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

In this chapter Uddhava hears the ten types of *citra-jalpa* [Rādhā's surprising talk or prattling, symptomatic of the highest stage of divine love madness, *mahābhāva*]. He then gives Kṛṣṇa's message to the *gopīs*, praises them and returns to Mathurā to report to Kṛṣṇa.

The word *su-vismitāḥ* (very astonished) means that the *gopīs* were surprised thinking, "How did Uddhava obtain Kṛṣṇa's yellow *dhoti* and His lotus garland?" In some editions, *su-vismitāḥ* is replaced with the word *śuci-smitāḥ*, which means the *gopīs*' smiles were pure (*suci:suddha*) because of the joy arising from seeing Uddhava in dress which reminded them of Kṛṣṇa.

"Who is this handsome man? Where has he come from and whose servant is he?" Seeing Uddhava, the *gopīs* became excited over the possibility of obtaining news about Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.47.3 ||

taṁ praśrayeṇāvanatāḥ su-sat-kṛtaṁ sa-vrīḍa-hāsekṣaṇa-sūnṛtādibhiḥ

rahasy apṛcchann upaviṣṭam āsane vijñāya sandeśa-haraṁ ramā-pateḥ

TRANSLATION

Bowing their heads in humility, the gopīs duly honored Uddhava with their shy, smiling glances and pleasing words. They took him to a quiet place, seated him comfortably and began to question him, for they recognized him to be a messenger from Kṛṣṇa, the master of the goddess of fortune.

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs* bowed their heads out of humility. Being naturally bashful, they covered their heads with their veils. This bashfulness suddenly appears on its own upon meeting any respectable person. Thinking that Uddhava must be an intimate friend of their beloved, the *gopīs* smiled, looked at him with curious eyes, greeted him with pleasing words (*sūnṛta*) of welcome, and worshiped him with foot wash and other items suitable to the time and place. They then asked Uddhava questions in private (*rahasy*), unseen by outsiders. By his coming promptly to such a place, they understood that Uddhava was bearing news about Kṛṣṇa, the master of Lakṣmī.

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī, siding with the *gopīs*, showed some jealousy towards Kṛṣṇa by addressing Him as *ramā-pateḥ*, the husband of Lakṣmī. By this phrase Śukadeva Gosvāmī implies the following: "The goddess of fortune herself is coming soon to Mathurā to make Kṛṣṇa happy. So what purpose could Kṛṣṇa have in making a pretense of sending messages to the cowherd girls?"

|| 10.47.4 ||

jānīmas tvāṁ yadu-pateḥ pārṣadaṁ samupāgatam

bhartreha preṣitaḥ pitror bhavān priya-cikīrṣayā

TRANSLATION

[The gopīs said:] We know that you are the personal servant of Kṛṣṇa, the chief of the Yadus, and that you have come here on the order of your good master, who desires to give pleasure to His parents.

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs* said, "We know who you are, so we do not have to ask. You are a follower of the Lord of the Yadus." By the word *yadu-pateḥ* (chief of the Yadus) the *gopīs* imply that, "Even though Kṛṣṇa is of the cowherd community, He is now living as the king of the Yadus. Having attained such a big post, why would He want to come back here? Therefore it seems, O Uddhava, that Kṛṣṇa has sent you, not for us, but to pacify His mother and father." In other words, we think Kṛṣṇa has sent you out of fear of criticism from the public who might say, 'What use has Kṛṣṇa for His parents who are cowherd people? Nanda and Yaśodā may cry themselves to death, but Kṛṣṇa will simply stay here in Mathurā and rule as King.'

"O charming fellow! The crest jewel of intelligent persons has sent you to satisfy His parents. Having come here, you should go to Nanda and Yaśodā. Upon receiving you, they will forget about Kṛṣṇa in their ecstasy. Indeed, the sharpness of Kṛṣṇa's intelligence has come in handy!"

In this way, there are many such implications of criticism hidden in the gopīs' words of false praise, which arise as the subtle, new buds on the tree of their words.

|| 10.47.5 ||

anyathā go-vraje tasya smaraṇīyaṁ na cakṣmahe

snehānubandho bandhūnāṁ muner api su-dustyajaḥ

TRANSLATION

We see nothing else He might consider worth remembering in these cow pastures of Vraja. Indeed, the bonds of affection for one's family members are difficult to break, even for a sage.

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs* said, "We do not see anyone else worthy of remembrance in Vraja. In other words, if Kṛṣṇa has in this way disregarded even His parents Yaśodā and Nanda, whom He remembers, then how is it possible for such persons like us to have a place in His memory at all? Even those who take *sannyāsa* find it hard to give up the relationship with their father and mother. But Kṛṣṇa has very easily given up His relationship with countless wives of others whom He enjoyed. Ah, just see the severity of Kṛṣṇa's renunciation!"

|| 10.47.6 ||

anyeṣv artha-kṛtā maitrī yāvad-artha-viḍambanam

pumbhiḥ strīṣu kṛtā yadvat sumanaḥsv iva ṣaṭpadaiḥ

TRANSLATION

The friendship shown toward others—those who are not family members—is motivated by personal interest, and thus it is a pretense that lasts only until one's purpose is fulfilled. Such friendship is just like the interest men take in women, or bees in flowers.

COMMENTARY

But it may be objected, "Because Kṛṣṇa has no need for a mother, father, brother or anyone, He should not have possessiveness of them. He has some use for you women, however, because of His wantonness, and therefore He should be remembering you all the more."

The *gopīs* respond to the objection in this verse: “Friendship with those other than one’s parents is motivated. Without those motives the relationships do not exist. Thus they should be condemned. Those who make friendship, those who are the object of friendship and those who assist in bringing about friendship are all to be condemned because of the selfish motivation. There is friendship where there is motive, and no friendship where there is no motive. The friendship of men and women is the same.”

“Attractive women, like flowers, possess beauty, fragrance, tenderness, sweetness and charm. As bees drink only once of a flower’s nectar and then leave it for another, fickle men abandon beautiful and devoted women to pursue other pleasures. Thus, since there is no friendship even when there is motivation, this relationship is even more despicable.”

|| 10.47.7 ||

niḥsvaṁ tyajanti gaṇikā akalpaṁ nṛpatiṁ prajāḥ

adhīta-vidyā ācāryam ṛtvijo datta-dakṣiṇam

TRANSLATION

Prostitutes abandon a penniless man, subjects an incompetent king, students their teacher once they have finished their education, and priests a man who has remunerated them for a sacrifice.

COMMENTARY

The last verse explained that friendships do not exist without motivation. In this verse the *gopīs* give a series of examples for logical illumination (*dīpaka nyāya*).

The gopīs said, “The prostitute abandons the penniless man. The citizens give up the king who cannot protect them. The priest gives up the sponsor once he has given a donation.”

|| 10.47.8 ||

khagā vīta-phalaṁ vṛkṣaṁ bhuktvā cātithayo gṛham

dagdhaṁ mṛgās tathāraṇyaṁ jārā bhuktvā ratāṁ striyam

TRANSLATION

Birds abandon a tree when its fruits are gone, guests a house after they have eaten, animals a forest that has burnt down, and a lover the woman he has enjoyed, even though she remains attached to him.

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs* said, “Birds give up a tree once the fruits are gone. A paramour gives up a woman though she is eager for enjoyment. But as long as she is young he does not give her up. When the motivation disappears the friendship ceases. Therefore, since Kṛṣṇa’s motives are being fulfilled by the women of Mathurā, why should He remember us?” By this they hint at Kṛṣṇa’s not having any love for them.

In this verse the word woman (*striyam*) is singular and paramours (*jārā*) is in the plural form. By this the *gopīs* imply: “It is alright to reject a woman who is involved with many men out of lust. But we are many who are simply devoted to one, and still He has no love for us. Our love is not impelled by lust since we have had love for Kṛṣṇa since our childhood. By neglecting so many of us Kṛṣṇa shows unprecedented cruelty in His heart.”

|| 10.47.9-10 ||

iti gopyo hi govinde gata-vāk-kāya-mānasāḥ

kṛṣṇa-dūte samāyāte uddhave tyakta-laukikāḥ

gāyantyaḥ prīya-karmāṇi rudantyaś ca gata-hriyaḥ

tasya saṁsmṛtya saṁsmṛtya yāni kaiśora-bālyayoḥ

TRANSLATION

Thus speaking, the gopīs, whose words, bodies and minds were fully dedicated to Lord Govinda, put aside all their regular work now that Kṛṣṇa’s messenger, Śrī Uddhava, had arrived among them. Constantly remembering the activities their beloved Kṛṣṇa had performed in His childhood and youth, they sang about them and cried without shame.

COMMENTARY

Tyakta-laukikāḥ means the *gopīs* had abandoned the customs of general society by revealing with their own mouths their indulgence in illicit love. While repeatedly singing about Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in childhood and youth, the *gopīs* forgot all external considerations and wept openly before Kṛṣṇa's messenger, Uddhava.

"Of His childhood and youth" (*kaiśora-bālyayoḥ*) indicates that ever since their childhood, the *gopīs*' love for Kṛṣṇa had been unconditional (*nirupādhikā*). It is not the case that in youth the gopīs love became conditionally motivated by lusty desires (*kamopādhikā*).

|| 10.47.11 ||

kācin madhukaraṁ dṛṣṭvā dhyāyantī kṛṣṇa-saṅgamam

priya-prasthāpitaṁ dūtaṁ kalpayitvedam abravīt

TRANSLATION

One of the gopīs, while meditating on Her previous association with Kṛṣṇa, saw a honeybee before Her and imagined it to be a messenger sent by Her beloved. Thus She spoke as follows.

COMMENTARY

According to Sanātana Gosvāmī's *Śrī Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī*, this *gopī* (*kācit*) is the embodiment of the seventh stage of *kṛṣṇa-prema*, pure love of Godhead, known as *mahābhāva* [*sneha, māna, pranaya, rāga, anurāga, bhāva, mahābhāva*], which itself is the essence of Kṛṣṇa's pleasure potency (*hlādinī-śakti*). In other words, this *gopī* is Vṛṣabhānunandinī Śrī Rādhā. Imagining in Her meditation how Kṛṣṇa is associating with the women of Mathurā, Rādhikā experiences the rise of jealous anger (*māna*) within Herself and thinks, "My beloved Śrī Kṛṣṇa has sent this messenger to pacify Me."

Thinking in this way, Rādhā addresses one bumblebee, which had just flown in front of Her. Or else, on the pretense of speaking to the bee, Rādhā was actually directing her words to Uddhava.

|| 10.47.12 ||

gopy uvāca

madhupa kitava-bandho mā spṛśaṅghriṁ sapatnyāḥ

kuca-vilulita-mālā-kuṅkuma-śmaśrubhir naḥ

vahatu madhu-patis tan-māninīnāṁ prasādaṁ

yadu-sadasi viḍambyaṁ yasya dūtas tvam īdṛk

TRANSLATION

The gopī said: O honeybee, O friend of a cheater, don't touch My feet with your whiskers, which are smeared with the kuṅkuma that rubbed onto Kṛṣṇa's garland when it was crushed by the breasts of a rival lover! Let Kṛṣṇa satisfy the women of Mathurā. One who sends a messenger like you will certainly be ridiculed in the Yadus' assembly.

COMMENTARY

Seeing the bee buzzing around greedy for the fragrance of Her lotus feet, Śrī Rādhā spoke impulsively (*prajalpa*) due to the influence of divine madness (*divyonmāda*): "O bee, friend of a wicked cheater (*kitava bandho*)." Rādhā then enumerates the reasons why Kṛṣṇa should be called a cheater: "Kṛṣṇa said, 'For My sake (*mad-arthojjhita*) You all have given up everything to come here filled with loving attraction, yet I have given You up. Please forgive Me for this injustice I have done.' (SB 10.32.21) Kṛṣṇa also said, 'You have surrendered yourselves to Me with the highest attraction, and it is impossible for Me to repay You' (*na parāye 'ham*). (SB 10.32.22) And while sitting on Akrūra's chariot Kṛṣṇa sent a message to us *gopīs*, who were pained by the impending separation from Him, saying, 'I will quickly come back from Mathurā.'" (SB 10.39.35)

"Because these statements are false Kṛṣṇa can rightly be called a cheater. O bee, as a friend of that cheater you are playing the role of a messenger. Don't touch My feet!"

The bee, making a buzzing sound, seemed to say, "What is this? Will you not let me offer obeisances to You?"

Rādhā said, "My feet will be contaminated if a drinker of liquor (*madhupa*) touches them, so if you want to pay obeisances then fly away some distance and do it." Rādhā used the word *madhupa*, which means "a drinker of liquor." According to the definition

found in the *Anekārtha-varga* dictionary, *madhu madye pusparase*, "*Madhu* can mean either liquor or the sap of a flower."

The bee seemed to reply, "Why are You accusing me of being drunk when I am faultless?"

Rādhā said, "This is not just an accusation, it is true. Do not touch Me with your whiskers tinged by the *kuṅkuma* of the flower garland from another woman's breasts, which has been crushed by contact with Kṛṣṇa's chest (or the garland worn by Kṛṣṇa which has been crushed by another woman's breasts.)" In this way Rādhikā ascribes such to the natural yellowness of a bee's whiskers.

Rādhā continued, "The fact that you have come here to conciliate Me, the maker of that garland, without even first washing off such *kuṅkuma* is indeed due to a complete lack of discrimination on your part, which is a sure sign of having been drinking liquor. You should have the sense to know that such an exhibition will only increase My jealousy not decrease it."

As the bee continued to hum, Rādhā thought that he was again speaking: "In any case, You should be happy."

Rādhā replied, "My dear bee, O protector of the liquor (*madhupa: madya-pālaka*)! Go back to your master, guard His store of liquor and drink some yourself. That is a good job for you because you are too stupid to be a qualified messenger."

While flying around and humming the bee seemed to be saying, "I see You are finding many faults. Why should I listen to all this? Now I am going to Mathurā. Let Kṛṣṇa come Himself and make You happy!"

Rādhā said, "Kṛṣṇa has now become the master of all the Madhus (*madhu-patiḥ*) in general. Although by His birth from Vrajeśvarī's (Yaśodā) womb Kṛṣṇa belongs to the cowherd caste, by some good fortune He has become a *kṣatriya*. Therefore, let Him always satisfy those *kṣatriya* women in Mathurā. What use does Kṛṣṇa have for us low-class cowherd women? But when Kṛṣṇa enjoys one of them, another will become jealous (*māna*), and when He satisfies that second one yet another will become jealous. Thus Kṛṣṇa will have to continuously satisfy them one after the other. Consequently, Kṛṣṇa

will have no free time to come here to see Us." By the plural usage of the word *māninīnām* (jealous women), Rādhā establishes that the women of the Madhu dynasty are countless, and thus Kṛṣṇa should satisfy each and every one of them.

The bee seemed to say, "You are the ocean of good fortune for Kṛṣṇa. You should not speak like this. If His mind is not fixed on You, why has He sent me here as His messenger?"

Rādhā answered, "You are the carrier (*dūtas tvam*) of the marks of Kṛṣṇa's love affairs with the *kṣatriya* women. Indeed this will be the cause of Kṛṣṇa being ridiculed (*viḍambyam*) in the assembly of the Yadus (*yadu-sadasi*). When the news of Kṛṣṇa's transgressions with the Yadu women becomes known their husbands will scorn Him. Or else, there will be ridicule against that assembly of Yadus, who are related to Him who has a messenger like you."

"In other words, the Yadus will be condemned by other *kṣatriyas* in different countries because their women were enjoyed by a cowherd man. He who has a messenger like you is also *madhu-pati*, the master of intoxicating liquors (*madhūnām:madyānām*). In this way, Kṛṣṇa must be a drunkard, since it is in the stupor of intoxication that He would have made a bee like you His messenger."

All the words used in this verse arise from the different emotions experienced by Rādhā. The word *kitava* (cheater) arises from Rādhā's indignation (*asūyā*). The word *sapatnyāḥ* (rival lover) arises from jealousy (*īrṣya*). The phrase *mā spṛśa-aṅghriṁ* (Do not touch My feet) expresses pride (*mada*). The words beginning *vahatu* (let Him bring) comes from Rādhā's desire to disrespect (*avadhīraṇam*). The phrase *yadu-sadasi viḍambyaṁ* (scorned in the assembly of Yadus) expresses Rādhā's urge to utter harsh words to decry Kṛṣṇa's tactless treatment of Her.

This and the following nine verses exemplify ten varieties of mad emotional talks (*citra-jalpa*) spoken impulsively by a lover. This verse illustrates the qualities of *prajalpa*, as described by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in his *Ujjvala-nīlamani* (14.182):

asūyerṣyā-mada-yujā yo 'vadhīraṇa-mudrayā

priyasyākauśalodgāraḥ prajalpaḥ sa tu kīrtyate

"*Prajalpa* is speech that denigrates the tactlessness of one's lover with expressions of disrespect. It is spoken in a mood of envy, jealousy and pride."

|| 10.47.13 ||

sakṛd adhara-sudhāṁ svāṁ mohinīṁ pāyayitvā

sumanasa iva sadyas tatyaje 'smān bhavādṛk

paricarati kathaṁ tat-pāda-padmaṁ nu padmā

hy api bata hṛta-cetā hy uttamaḥ-śloka-jalpaiḥ

TRANSLATION

After making us drink the enchanting nectar of His lips only once, Kṛṣṇa suddenly abandoned us, just as you might quickly abandon some flowers. How is it, then, that Goddess Padmā willingly serves His lotus feet? Alas! The answer must certainly be that her mind has been stolen away by His deceitful words.

COMMENTARY

The bee seemed to say, "This yellow color of my whiskers is only natural since I am a bee. It is not the *kuṅkuma* from Kṛṣṇa's associa-tion with another woman. What offense has Kṛṣṇa committed? He thinks only of You, and never looks at any of the women in Mathurā, even while dreaming. Why have You become so angry?"

Rādhā replies, "After making us drink the nectar of His lips just once, Kṛṣṇa has given us up. That is His offense." Though Kṛṣṇa had actually kissed the *gopīs* many times, by saying that Kṛṣṇa kissed them only once Rādhā expresses Her extreme loving thirst, out of attachment to Kṛṣṇa.

Rādhā continued, "Because Kṛṣṇa's lips are full of nectar, in spite of our suffering We have not died. Kṛṣṇa previously considered, 'If all the *gopīs* die of such torment, then who will be left that I can torture? So to prevent them from dying I will make them drink the nectar of My lips.'" That is the meaning of Rādhā's words.

Rādhā said, "Then after giving us just a taste of that nectar, Kṛṣṇa immediately abandoned us. You should consider that if Kṛṣṇa really wanted to give Us happiness, He would have forcibly made Us drink the nectar repeatedly."

The buzzing bee said, “But if this is the case, then why do you chaste ladies still desire Him?”

Rādhā answered, “That nectar destroyed (*mohinīm*) Our intelligence. By tasting that nectar Our hopes in this and the next life have all been destroyed. Kṛṣṇa does not consider the saying, ‘One should never cut down a tree one has himself planted, even if it is poisonous.’ What Kṛṣṇa likes and dislikes is astonishing. Just as Viṣṇu made the demigods (*sumanasaḥ:deva-śreṇīḥ*) drink the nectar churned from the ocean, Kṛṣṇa made us drink the nectar of His lips. Yet He also abandoned us just as a bee abandons jasmine flowers (*sumanasaḥ:mālatīḥ*).”

The bee said, “But when Kṛṣṇa abandoned You was it Your fault or His?”

Rādhā answered, “Just as you abandon flowers, so Kṛṣṇa abandoned Us. Just consider whose fault it is when a bee abandons some jasmine flowers? We are also famous in Vraja as being like the jasmine (*sumanasa*) flowers in fragrance, softness, attractiveness and purity due to our spotlessly clean minds (*su-manas*). Whereas, Kṛṣṇa is famous for being like a fickle bee desiring only His own pleasure.

“This is not just a poetic metaphor. It is Kṛṣṇa’s fault of fickleness that makes Him abandon a multitude of jasmines and become attracted to inferior flowers, only again to detach Himself later from them. Why should We not become angry with Kṛṣṇa out of jealousy (*māna*), just as we would with the bee?”

The bee argued, “It is well known from scriptures that Kṛṣṇa is faultless. After all, Garga Muni, who knows the scriptures, has said that Kṛṣṇa is equal to Nārāyaṇa (*nārāyaṇa-samaḥ*).”

Rādhā said, “Well, that may be, but how can that cover up what We see in real life-such as the way He cheats others?”

Pondering this, Rādhā found a reason why Lakṣmī serves Kṛṣṇa: “Lakṣmī serves Kṛṣṇa because her mind is taken away by any and all glorification of Him (*uttamaḥ-śloka*) submitted by ordinary, garrulous flatterers. Lakṣmī is thus very simple-minded, but we,

on the other hand, having been endowed by the creator with the assets of insight, wit and broad intelligence are not going to act like her."

In this verse the words *pāyayitvā* (by making us drink) and *mohinīm* (we lose our intelligence) show Kṛṣṇa's deceptive nature. The word *sadyaḥ* (He instantly gives them up) expresses Kṛṣṇa's mercilessness in abandoning the *gopīs*. The word *bhavādṛk* (like you the bee) indicates Kṛṣṇa's unsteadiness, and the allusion to Lakṣmī's being simple-minded reveals Rādhā's cleverness. All the words indicate Kṛṣṇa's ungrateful nature and complete lack of love for them. This verse is an example of *parijalpa*, which is described in *Śrī Ujjvala-nīlamaṇī* (14.184):

prabhor nidayatā-śāṭhya-cāpalyādy-upapādanāt

sva-vicakṣaṇatā-vyaktir bhaṅgyā syāt parijalpitam

"*Parijalpa* is that speech which, through various devices, shows one's own cleverness by exposing the mercilessness, duplicity, fickleness, ungratefulness and other qualities of one's Lord."

|| 10.47.14 ||

kim iha bahu ṣaḍ-aṅghre gāyasi tvaṁ yadūnām

adhipatim agṛhāṇām agrato naḥ purāṇam

vijaya-sakha-sakhīnāṁ gīyatāṁ tat-prasaṅgaḥ

kṣapita-kuca-rujas te kalpayantīṣṭam iṣṭāḥ

TRANSLATION

O bee, why do you sing here so much about the Lord of the Yadus, in front of us homeless people? These topics are old news to us. Better you sing about that friend of Arjuna in front of His new girlfriends, the burning desire in whose breasts He has now relieved. Those ladies will surely give you the charity you are begging.

COMMENTARY

Seeing the bee constantly buzzing due to his nature, Rādhā thought, "Agitated by My criticism of him, he is singing his own glories."

Rādhā then said, “Why are you singing in this place, the assembly of cowherd women? The songs of an ignorant bee will not please the *gopīs*. Nevertheless you keep on singing! Not only that, but in those songs you are publicizing the glories of the leader of the Yadus (*yadūnām adhipatim*). Moreover, you are doing this right in front of us, who were made by Kṛṣṇa to give up our homes and are now sitting at the edge of the forest. We will not give you even a handful of chickpeas in charity.”

If the bee replies, “Then just give me some old clothing or garlands You have worn.”

Rādhā replied, “I will not give these to a complete fool like you. Reciting the *Purāṇas*, you are trying to prove that Kṛṣṇa is the Lord of the Yadus. O six-legged creature! (*sat-aṅghre*) An animal at least has four legs, but you have six so you are an animal-and-a-half! Thus being so ignorant, you don’t know where or what to sing. And being an animal, how would you know the *Purāṇas*? So how do you expect to receive any charity? But since you are merely an animal, We won’t become angry with you. Rather, We will advise you where you should sing in order to support yourself. You should sing in front of the girl friends of that friend of yours who is preeminently victorious (*vijaya sakhā*) or defeated by them in the battle of love. You should sing all about those victories and defeats in love.”

Vijaya-sakhā can also mean the friend of Arjuna who is also known as Vijaya, the victor. Previously Kṛṣṇa was known as the friend of Subala, but after He left Vraja He became known as the friend of Arjuna. This pronouncement of things yet to come has spontaneously emanated from Rādhā’s mouth.

Rādhā said, “Furthermore, the women of Mathurā, now relieved of the burning pain in their breasts (*kṣapita-kuca-rujas*), will fulfill your desires (*īṣṭam:vaṇchitam*), and they will be honored (*iṣṭāḥ: pūjitāḥ*) by hearing your song about Kṛṣṇa.”

In this verse we observe in Rādhā’s mood the seed of jealous anger, which arises from an apparent disdain for Kṛṣṇa, accompanied by a sarcastic, sidelong glance directed toward Him. This verse fits the following description of *vijalpa* from the *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi* (14.186):

vyaktayāsūyayā gūḍha-māna-mudrāntarālayā

agha-dviṣi kaṭākṣoktir vijalpo viduṣāṁ mataḥ

"According to learned authorities, *vijalpa* is sarcastic speech criticizing Kṛṣṇa, the killer of Agha. Such speech openly expresses jealousy while at the same time concealing the angry pride in one's heart."

|| 10.47.15 ||

divi bhuvi ca rasāyāṁ kāḥ striyas tad-durāpāḥ

kapaṭa-rucira-hāsa-bhrū-vijṛmbhasya yāḥ syuḥ

caraṇa-raja upāste yasya bhūtir vayaṁ kā

api ca kṛpaṇa-pakṣe hy uttamaḥ-śloka-śabdaḥ

TRANSLATION

In heaven, on earth or in the subterranean sphere, what women are unavailable to Him? He simply arches His eyebrows and smiles with deceptive charm, and they all become His. The supreme goddess herself worships the dust of His feet, so what is our position in comparison? But at least those who are wretched can chant His name, Uttamaḥśloka.

COMMENTARY

Hearing the buzzing of the bee, Rādhā thought he was saying, "O crest-jewel of Kṛṣṇa's lovers! In Mathurā, Kṛṣṇa suffers from the piercing arrows of love. He spends His days and night simply meditating upon You. He can be saved only if You become pleased."

Rādhā disdainfully replied to this in this verse: *divi bhuvi ca rasāyāṁ kāḥ striyas tad-durāpāḥ*, "In heaven, on earth or in the subterranean sphere, what women are unobtainable for Kṛṣṇa?"

The meaning is: "I know perfectly well that Kṛṣṇa cannot pass His time without the company of young women. If Kṛṣṇa can't meet any women in Mathurā, then it is good that He meditates upon us and tries to satisfy us by sending a messenger like you to bring us there. Don't tell us that the women in Mathurā, being of the *kṣatriya* caste, will not accept a person of cowherd birth, for there is no one unavailable to Kṛṣṇa in all the three worlds. Both the demi-goddesses in heaven and the Nāgapatnīs in hell will all give up their husbands if by chance Kṛṣṇa appears before them. Then what to speak of the women of Mathurā? For obtaining these women Kṛṣṇa does not have to depend on any pious deeds or monetary payment."

“Under false pretenses Kṛṣṇa smiles and arches His eyebrows to enchant (*rucira:sarvāsām manoharau*) all women. As a result, the demi-goddesses and other women become the property of Kṛṣṇa and no longer belong to their husbands. Simply for the price of His deceptive smile they sell themselves and abandon their own husbands.”

By the word *kapaṭa* (deceptive) Rādhā implies, “Kṛṣṇa is deceptive because after enjoying them once, He immediately abandons them and looks for new women. What to speak of the heavenly women, even Lakṣmī (*bhūtir:Lakṣmī*), the consort of Lord Nārāyaṇa, worships the dust of Kṛṣṇa’s feet in order to gain His association, according to the prayers of the Nāgapatnīs which we heard from the mouth of Paurṇamāsī. Therefore how can We remain unaffected? After all, We are only humans, mere cowherd women residing in the forest of Vṛndāvana.”

Although these words are full of humility, actually through the inflection of Rādhā’s voice and the nodding of Her head they imply a spiteful attitude due to pride. Through that jealousy (spitefulness) Rādhā reveals Her superiority to Lakṣmī and all others in *prema*, beauty, and caste-compatibility with the Lord.

Rādhā continued, “One is called Uttamaḥśloka if he is merciful to the wretched and fallen. Since Kṛṣṇa lacks this quality, that name (*uttamaḥ-śloka*) is falsely ascribed to Him. If Kṛṣṇa would be merciful to Me, then He would actually deserve this exalted name.” Thus Rādhā subtly abuses Kṛṣṇa by addressing Him as Uttamaḥśloka.

Rādhā’s speech, expressing all the feelings of a disappointed lover, indicates an intensity of love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa surpassing even that of Lakṣmī, the goddess of fortune. In the first half of this verse, Rādhā accuses Kṛṣṇa of being a cheater by citing His attraction to all women. The third line expresses Rādhā’s spite or jealousy (*īrṣa*) born out of pride (*garva*). In the last line Rādhā finds fault (*ākṣepo*) with Kṛṣṇa’s behavior due to Her indignation (*āsūya*).

Thus this verse contains speech known as ujjalpa, described in the following verse from Ujjvala-nīlamaṇī (14.188):

hareḥ kuhakatākhyānaṁ garva-garbhitayerṣyayā

sāsūyaś ca tad-ākṣepo dhīrair ujjalpa īryate

"The declaration of Lord Hari's duplicitous nature in a mood of spite born of pride, together with jealously spoken insults directed against Him, has been termed *ujjalpa* by the wise."

|| 10.47.16 ||

visṛja śirasi pādaṁ vedmy ahaṁ cātu-kārair

anunaya-viduṣas te 'bhyetya dautyair mukundāt

sva-kṛta iha viṣṛṣṭāpatya-paty-anya-lokā

vyasṛjad akṛta-cetāḥ kiṁ nu sandheyam asmin

TRANSLATION

Keep your head off My feet! I know what you're doing. You expertly learned diplomacy from Mukunda, and now you come as His messenger with flattering words. But He abandoned those who for His sake alone gave up their children, husbands and all other relations. He's simply ungrateful. Why should I make up with Him now?

COMMENTARY

While the bee was flying around it landed on Rādhā's foot out of greed for Her fragrance. By continually buzzing, it seemed to say, "O lady, worshipable by millions of Lakṣmīs! Truly Kṛṣṇa has offended You, but I say that You should forgive Him."

Thinking that the bee was offering his respects to Her, Rādhā said, "Why are you touching your head to My foot. Please go away! Let go (*visṛja:tyaja*) of My foot, which you are holding on your head. In other words, get out of here!"

By saying *Vedmy ahaṁ* (I know this) Rādhā means, "I know you, so you cannot cheat Me like you cheat Lakṣmī and others. You have learned from Mukunda, and thus are very skilful in humble entreaties, and sending messages with sweet flattering words (*cāṭu-kāraīḥ:priyokti-racanaiḥ*). Thus I fully understand your behavior, and know that you have learned all this from Kṛṣṇa."

The bee replied, "But, mistress, what is the use of quarreling with Kṛṣṇa who is millions of times dearer to You than Your own life? Rather You should make peace with Him through me."

Rādhā said, “For Kṛṣṇa’s sake, we gave up children, husbands, mothers and fathers, yet He gave us up and left. The *gopīs* who were prevented from going to the *rāsa* dance gave up their children and went to meet Him. We gave up husbands, and the unmarried girls gave up their parents. But despite all this, what was Kṛṣṇa’s response? Being ungrateful (*akṛta-cetāḥ*), He just abandoned (*vyasṛjat*) us. Should one make peace with such a hard-hearted person? No! Never!”

The first half of the verse shows a gesture of sarcastic criticism and the second half shows Kṛṣṇa’s ungratefulness and other qualities like treachery, mercilessness and lack of love. This verse illustrates the qualities of *sañjalpa*, as described by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in the following verse of his *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi* (14.190):

solluṇṭhayā gahanayā kayāpy ākṣepa-mudrayā

tasyākṛta-jñatādy-uktiḥ sañjalpaḥ kathito budhaiḥ

“The learned describe *sañjalpa* as that speech which decries with deep irony and insulting gestures the beloved’s ungratefulness.” The word *ādi* in this verse (*jñatādy*) from *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, implies the perception in one’s lover of hard-heartedness, of an inimical attitude and of a complete lack of love.

|| 10.47.17 ||

mṛgayur iva kapīndraṁ vivyadhe lubdha-dharmā

striyam akṛta virūpāṁ strī-jitaḥ kāma-yānām

balim api balim attvāveṣṭayad dhvāṅkṣa-vad yas

tad alam asita-sakhyair dustyajas tat-kathārthaḥ

TRANSLATION

Like a hunter, He cruelly shot the king of the monkeys with arrows. Because He was conquered by a woman, He disfigured another woman who came to Him with lusty desires. And even after consuming the gifts of Bali Mahārāja, He bound him up with ropes as if he were a crow. So let us give up all friendship with this dark-complexioned boy, even if we can’t give up talking about Him.

COMMENTARY

The bee seemed to say, “O Rādhā, as far as I can see in Mathurā, soft-hearted Kṛṣṇa is simply meditating upon You.”

Rādhā replied, “You are simply an inexperienced servant! Because you are new to Mathurā you do not know the facts about Kṛṣṇa. Not only is He cruel in this lifetime, but even in many previous lives He has been so, as we have heard from Paurṇamāsī. When Kṛṣṇa appeared as a *kṣatriya* in the form of Rāma, He transgressed *kṣatriya dharma* and mercilessly killed Vāli, the king of the monkeys, by hiding behind a tree just like a hunter kills a deer. In this story there is even more impiety because Kṛṣṇa did not even adhere to the *dharma* of a hunter. The hunter never kills monkeys because their flesh is inedible and no one will buy it.”

“Now listen to yet another instance of Kṛṣṇa’s irreligiosity. Overcome with lust, a woman named Śūrpaṇakhā once desired Rāma. But Rāma disfigured here by cutting off her nose and ears, so that no one else would want to enjoy with her. That was simply because of His cruel nature. Rāma did not perform this cruel act because He was upholding a vow of celibacy while wearing matted locks and the dress of a renunciate. Because at that time Rāma was living with Sītā, being conquered by Her (*strī-jitaḥ*) love.”

“Similarly, when Kṛṣṇa appeared previously as Vāmana, a dwarf *brāhmaṇa*, He rejected the qualities of the *brāhmaṇa* such as peace-fulness and straightforwardness. After enjoying (*attvā:bhuktvā*) the offerings (*balim:tat-pūjopahāram*) made by the pious king Bali, Vamana cast Bali down from his lordship of the three worlds into a hole below the earth.”

An alternative reading to this follows: “Kṛṣṇa deceitfully tied up Bali just like a crow. A crow devours the offerings meant for worship, and then, calling other crows, surrounds the woman doing *pūjā* and mocks her. Similarly, Vāmana called His own people, who then surrounded Bali and tormented him.”

“Enough of friendships with that black-complexioned (*asita*: Kṛṣṇa) man! For us golden-complexioned women, despite all the varieties of friendship we have had with Kṛṣṇa, not one has proven auspicious. One should be extremely wary of Kṛṣṇa because He has such an impure heart (*asitāḥ:aśuddha-cittāḥ*). Therefore, what use do We have for such a person?”

The bee seemed to say, “But how is Your heart pure if You are constantly criticizing others?”

Rādhā replied, “Talking about Kṛṣṇa’s activities in His past lives is hard to give up, even though it makes us unhappy. Though We should not be talking about Kṛṣṇa, We cannot stop talking whether We criticize Him or not.”

Another meaning: “Though We have given Him up, We cannot stop talking about Him.” As the subject is not mentioned in the phrase *dustyajas tat-kathārthaḥ* (impossible to give up topics about Him), it infers that even for the best of munis it is difficult to give up speaking about Kṛṣṇa.

Rādhā’s describing the shooting (*vivyadhe*) of Vali indicates Kṛṣṇa’s ruthless cruel nature; being controlled by woman (*strī-jitaḥ*) indicates Kṛṣṇa’s lust; accepting offerings (*balim*) indicates Kṛṣṇa’s fraud; and friendship with that black fellow (*asita-sakhyaiḥ*) indicates fear and malice, and that Kṛṣṇa is not worth becoming attached to.

This speech of Rādhārāṇī’s is called *avajalpa*, as described by Rūpa Gosvāmī in Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi (14.192):

> *harau kāṭhinya-kāmitva-dhaurtyād āsakty-ayogyatā*
>
> *yatra serṣyā-bhiyevoktā so ’vajalpaḥ satāṁ mataḥ*
>
> “Saintly persons have concluded that when a lover, impelled by jealousy and fear, declares that Lord Hari is unworthy of her attachment because of His harshness, lustiness and dishonesty such speech is called *avajalpa*.”

|| 10.47.18 ||

yad-anucarita-līlā-karṇa-pīyūṣa-vipruṭ-

sakṛd-adana-vidhūta-dvandva-dharmā vinaṣṭāḥ

sapadi gṛha-kuṭumbaṁ dīnam utsṛjya dīnā

bahava iha vihaṅgā bhikṣu-caryāṁ caranti

TRANSLATION

To hear about the pastimes that Kṛṣṇa regularly performs is nectar for the ears. For those who relish just a single drop of that nectar, even once, their dedication to material duality is ruined. Many such persons have suddenly given up their wretched homes and families and, themselves becoming wretched, traveled here to Vṛndāvana to wander about like birds, begging for their living.

COMMENTARY

In this verse Rādhā says, “But what is so remarkable about our suffering after establishing a relationship with Kṛṣṇa? After all, just narrations of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes create sorrow for the entire world.”

Rādhā said, “Just hearing about the pastimes Kṛṣṇa performed at every moment (*anucaritam*) is nectar for the ears, what to speak of the joy one gets by understanding their meaning. Even one drop of this nectar completely destroys (*vidhūtāḥ:viṣeṣeṇa khaṇḍitāḥ*) the propensities of duality, and the propensities of mutual friendship between women and men.”

“If a wife hears discussions about Kṛṣṇa, she immediately gives up affection for her husband. And if a husband hears them he gives up affection for his wife. The same is also true for a child in connection with his mother and father. If a mother hears about Kṛṣṇa, she loses all affection for her children. Thus, by this mutual rejection they all become totally ruined (*vinaṣṭāḥ*).”

“But in their ruination there is not as much misery as in renunci-ation, as evidenced by the experience of ordinary society. Though the people who develop a taste for Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes are soft-hearted, they also become hard-hearted, merciless and ungrateful after hearing the pastimes of hard-hearted Kṛṣṇa. Just by hearing about Kṛṣṇa they immediately give up their homes and families, including even their parents and sisters-in-law who then suffer with no other means of support, and without even enough money for the next day’s food. Or else they abandon their families, who are distraught by this separation, and give them up to death with an offering of *kusa* grass and water.”

“Alas! Alas! Even if we disregard that their wives and children may die, even they themselves fail to become happy. They are penniless (*dīnāḥ*) after leaving their families, due to having forgotten to tie up even a few coins in their cloth, because of the agitation of their minds while leaving. This is not the case of one man or two, or just three or four people. This has been the case with countless hundreds and thousands of people.” If the alternate reading *dhīraḥ* is taken instead of *dīnāḥ*, it means: “In spite of seeing their wife cry, they are unmoved or hardhearted.”

But it may be questioned, “How do they maintain their lives?”

Rādhā answers, “Like (*iya*) birds (*vihaṅgāḥ*), they live by begging, just collecting small amounts of wheat and other grains, rather than taking substantial charity from one person.” The word *iva* is often used instead of *iha*. In that case it means: “They come begging here in Vṛndāvana, the place of suffering, and suffer even more in our association.”

But someone may object, “*Kṛṣṇa-līlā* is like a poisonous mixture of sugarcane juice and powdered seeds of the *dhatura* plant. The speaker of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes is a murderer in the dress of a saint. The *Purāṇas* are a net. The speaker may be seen wandering from forest to forest with the Purāṇas tucked under his arm. Vyāsa and others are the makers of this net, which teaches that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead.”

Rādhā replies, “For this reason Kṛṣṇa has accepted the role of the Supreme thinking, ‘Just like the *gopīs*, I will make all people fall into the ocean of suffering.’ Indeed, seeing others’ suffering is Kṛṣṇa’s only happiness. As a result, Kṛṣṇa must bear the consequence of giving such misery to others, not Vyāsa and other sages.”

As we can see there are thousands of implications in this verse. Through condemnation Rādhā is indirectly praising Kṛṣṇa, and thus establishing the superexcellence of *suddha-bhakti*, pure devotional service. By mentioning the example of the birds Rādhā shows that it is appropriate to leave Kṛṣṇa because He inflicts pain on innocent people. Such remorseful statements constitute *abhijalpa*, as defined by Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī in *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi* 14.194:

> *bhaṅgyā tyāgaucitī tasya khagānām api khedanāt*
>
> *yatra sānuśayaṁ proktā tad bhaved abhijalpitam*
>
> “When a lover indirectly states with remorse that her beloved is fit to be given up because he is so cruel that he tortures even the innocent birds, such speech is called *abhijalpa*.”

|| 10.47.19 ||

vayam ṛtam iva jihma-vyāhṛtaṁ śraddadhānāḥ

kulika-rutam ivājñāḥ kṛṣṇa-vadhvo hariṇyaḥ

dadṛśur asakṛd etat tan-nakha-sparśa-tīvra

smara-ruja upamantrin bhaṇyatām anya-vārtā

TRANSLATION

Faithfully taking His deceitful words as true, we became just like the black deer's foolish wives, who trust the cruel hunter's song. Thus we repeatedly felt the sharp pain of lust caused by the touch of His nails. O messenger, please talk about something besides Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

The bee seemed to say, "Why did such intelligent ladies as You establish friendship with such a person as Kṛṣṇa?"

Rādhā said, "We were so foolish to accept as true (*ṛtam:satyam*) such lying words of His as *na pāraye 'haṁ iravadya-samyujām*, 'I can never repay My debt to You.' (SB 10.32.22) This is just like the wives of the black deer (*kṛṣṇa-vadhvo*), who by having faith in the song of the hunter see the result of his song by feeling the striking of his arrow. Similarly, we also experienced the sharp pangs of lust (*smara-ruja*) with the touch of Kṛṣṇa's fingernails."

"We have been extremely foolish, since even after once seeing its consequence, we repeatedly (*asakṛt*) trusted Kṛṣṇa and had to again experience the result. This applies to the does as well as to ourselves, who in both cases have had to suffer repeatedly a distressful condition because of their jealous pride. Therefore O jester! Speak of other things which will make Us happy, for news of Kṛṣṇa simply makes Us suffer." The word *upamantrin* can mean messenger or jester (*vidūsaka*).

This verse is an example of *ājalpa*, which Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī defines thus:

> *jaihmyaṁ tasyārti-datvaṁ ca nirvedād yatra kīrtitam*
>
> *bhaṅgyānya-sukha-datvaṁ ca sa ājalpa udīritaḥ*
>
> "A statement spoken in disgust, describing how the male lover is deceitful and brings one misery, and that one should stop talking about him, and talk about something more pleasant instead is known as *ājalpa*." (*Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi* 14.196)

|| 10.47.20 ||

priya-sakha punar āgāḥ preyasā preṣitaḥ kiṁ

varaya kim anurundhe mānanīyo 'si me 'ṅga

nayasi katham ihāsmān dustyaja-dvandva-pārśvaṁ

satatam urasi saumya śrīr vadhūḥ sākam āste

TRANSLATION

O friend of My dear one, has My beloved sent you here again? I should honor you, friend, so please choose whatever boon you wish. But why have you come back here to take us to Him, whose conjugal love is so difficult to give up? After all, gentle bee, His consort is the goddess Śrī, and she is always with Him, staying upon His chest.

COMMENTARY

Though the bee was buzzing around near Her, Rādhā, out of the madness of *prema*, could not find him. Not seeing him for a moment, Rādhā pondered remorsefully, "Alas, alas! Distressed by My harsh words, that messenger has gone off to Mathurā and told everything that has happened to Kṛṣṇa, who has now become indifferent to Me."

Giving up Her quarrelsome mood, Rādhā stared at the path to Mathurā and said, "Perhaps My beloved, the ocean of divine love and the crown jewel of all transcendental qualities, will again send His messenger here."

Suddenly seeing the bee, Rādhā said respectfully, "O friend of My beloved, you have come back again! Though wounded by the arrows of My words, due to your saintly character you have overlooked My offenses and returned. Can I understand that My beloved, out of intense love for Me, has sent you here again, not considering My thousands of offenses? If that is so, then you should ask for whatever you wish (*anurundhe:kāmayase*) from Me and I will fulfill your desire. O bee, if you say, 'I want You to go to Mathurā' then I will answer, 'Yes, I will go to Mathurā.'"

After saying that Rādhā thought, "But if I go to Mathurā and see My beloved surrounded by other women, I will become uncontrollably jealous." Thus Rādhā said *nayasi katham*, "Why are you taking Me to Kṛṣṇa, who cannot give up loving affairs?"

Thinking the bee said, "I swear that Kṛṣṇa is all alone in Mathurā," Rādhā replied, "O gentle one of pure intelligence (*saumya*)! Kṛṣṇa's consort Lakṣmī (*srīr vadhūḥ*) is always by His side, and moreover always on His chest taking shelter of the Lord."

The goddess of fortune, Śrī or Lakṣmī, has the power to assume many different forms. Thus when Kṛṣṇa enjoys other women, she stays on His chest in the form of a golden line. When Kṛṣṇa is not consorting with other women, Lakṣmī puts aside this form and gives Him pleasure in Her naturally beautiful form of a young woman.

Although Rādhikā respects the bee in this verse and accepts his statements as true, She then rejects them after showing how they are inappropriate. This is an example of *pratijalpa* defined thus:

> *dustyaja-dvandva-bhāve 'smin prāptir nārhety anuddhatam*
>
> *dūta-sammānanenoktaṁ yatra sa pratijalpakaḥ*
>
> "Humble statements expressing respect for the messenger, but with refusal to meet Kṛṣṇa because of His licentious relationships with other women is called *pratijalpa*." (*Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi* 14.198)

|| 10.47.21 ||

api bata madhu-puryām ārya-putro 'dhunāste

smarati sa pitṛ-gehān saumya bandhūṁś ca gopān

kvacid api sa kathā naḥ kiṅkarīṇāṁ gṛṇīte

bhujam aguru-sugandhaṁ mūrdhny adhāsyat kadā nu

TRANSLATION

O Uddhava! It is indeed regrettable that Kṛṣṇa resides in Mathurā. Does He remember His father's household affairs and His friends, the cowherd boys? O great soul! Does He ever talk about us, His maidservants? When will He lay on our heads His aguru-scented hand?

COMMENTARY

Rādhā thought, "Oh, in My madness I have been talking, but I did not ask the questions I should have."

Thus feeling remorse, Rādhā reverentially spoke this verse: “Is the noble son of Nanda Mahārāja now in Mathurā? Just as Kṛṣṇa left Vraja, will He also leave Mathurā?” Rādhā did not ask if Kṛṣṇa was happy there, but simply asked if He was there.

At this time Śrīmati Rādhikā thought, “Since Kṛṣṇa was once satisfied in Vraja but left for Mathurā City, won’t He also develop a desire to leave that place and go somewhere else? Mathurā is so close to Vṛndāvana that it’s possible Kṛṣṇa may even come back here. Kṛṣṇa is the son of a respectable gentleman, Nanda Mahārāja, so He must be staying in Mathurā because of His sense of obligation to His father, who authorized His going there. On the other hand, while Nanda’s whole life is dedicated exclusively to Kṛṣṇa, Nanda is so innocent that he allowed himself to be tricked by the Yadus, who brought Kṛṣṇa to Mathurā. Kṛṣṇa must be thinking, ‘Alas, alas! Since even My father could not bring Me back to Vraja, what can I do to return there?’ Thus Kṛṣṇa must be impatient to come back here, and so He has sent you, a messenger.”

“It is only because Nanda is so innocent that he allowed his son to leave. If Nanda had allowed Kṛṣṇa’s mother, the queen of Vraja, to do so, she would have climbed onto Akrūra’s chariot and, holding her son by the neck, gone off to Mathurā with Him, followed by all the gopīs. But this was not possible.”

“Ever since Kṛṣṇa left, Nanda has been stunned by separation from Him, and Nanda’s treasury rooms, storehouses, kitchens, sleeping quarters and opulent houses are now vacant. Unswept and uncleansed, they are littered with grass, dust, leaves and cobwebs. Does Kṛṣṇa ever remember His father’s houses? And does He sometimes remember Subala and His other friends, who are now lying stunned in other neglected houses?”

“The women in Mathurā who now associate with Kṛṣṇa cannot know how to serve Him in the way that pleases Him most. When they see He is not satisfied and ask how they can make Him happy, does He tell them about us gopīs? Kṛṣṇa must tell them, ‘You city ladies cannot please Me as much as the gopīs of Vraja. They are most expert in stringing flower garlands, perfuming their bodies with ointments, playing various rhythms and melodies on stringed instruments, dancing and singing in the *rāsa* performance, displaying their beauty, charm and cleverness, and skillfully playing at questions and answers. They are especially expert in the pastimes of meeting one’s lover and in all the stages of *prema* such as *sneha, māna* and *pranaya*.’ Surely Kṛṣṇa must know this. Therefore He’ll probably tell the women of Mathurā, ‘My dear women of the Yadu clan, please go back to your families. I no longer desire to associate with you. In fact, I’m going back to Vraja early tomorrow morning.’”

“When will Kṛṣṇa speak like this and come back here to place His hand, fragrant with *aguru*, on our heads? Then He will console us, saying, ‘O beloveds of My heart, I swear to you that I will never abandon you again and go elsewhere. Indeed, I have not been able to find anyone in all the three worlds with even a trace of Your good qualities.’”

The first line of the verse shows simplicity. The second line shows gravity in not mentioning oneself, and the third and fourth lines show humility, unsteadiness and eagerness. This verse is an example of *sujalpa*, which Rūpa Gosvāmī defines thus:

> *yatrārjavāt sa-gāmbhīryaṁ sa-dainyaṁ saha-cāpalam*
>
> *sotkaṇṭhaṁ ca hariḥ pṛṣṭaḥ sa sujalpo nigadyate*
>
> “When, out of honest sincerity, a lover enquires about Śrī Hari with gravity, humility, unsteadiness and intense eager-ness, such speech is known as *sujalpa*.’’ (*Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi* 14.200)

There are ten divisions of divine madness (*divyonmāda*), which are expressed by the ten types of *citra-jalpa*, or variegated speech. These ten types of madness appear in Rādhā in Her manifestation of bewilderment (*mohana*), the most excellent part of *mahābhāva*.

The following verses from Rūpa Gosvāmi’s *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi* (14.174, 178-80) explain these ecstasies:

> *prāyo vṛndāvaneśvaryāṁ mohano ’yam udañcati*
>
> *etasya mohanākhyasya gatiṁ kām apy upeyuṣaḥ*
>
> *bhramābhā kāpi vaicitrī divyonmāda itīryate*
>
> *udghūrṇā citra-jalpādyās tad-bhedā bahavo matāḥ*
>
> *preṣṭhasya suhṛd-āloke gūḍha-roṣābhijṛmbhitaḥ*
>
> *bhūri-bhāva-mayo jalpo yas tīvrotkaṇṭhitāntimaḥ*
>
> *citra-jalpo daśāṅgo ’yaṁ prajalpaḥ parijalpitaḥ*
>
> *vijalpo ’jjalpa-sañjalpaḥ avajalpo ’bhijalpitam*
>
> *ājalpaḥ pratijalpaś ca sujalpaś ceti kīrtitaḥ*

"*Mohana*, the transcendental ecstasy of bewilderment, arises primarily in Rādhā and reaches an indescribable state, resembling delusion. It is then called *divyonmāda*. It has many aspects such *udghūrṇā* and *citra-jalpa*. This ecstatic talk, induced by seeing a friend of one's beloved, and filled with covered anger, culminates in extreme eagerness. There are ten types of *citra jalpa* known as *prajalpa, parijalpa, vijalpa, ujjalpa, sañjalpa, avajalpa, abhijalpa, ājalpa, pratijalpa and sujalpa*."

Some authorities say that Kṛṣṇa assumed the form of the messenger bee in order to drink the sweetness of Rādhā's *citra-jalpa*.

|| 10.47.22 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

athoddhavo niśamyaivaṁ kṛṣṇa-darśana-lālasāḥ

sāntvayan priya-sandeśair gopīr idam abhāṣata

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having heard this, Uddhava then tried to pacify the gopīs, who were most eager to see Lord Kṛṣṇa. He thus began relating to them the message of their beloved.

|| 10.47.23 ||

śrī-uddhava uvāca

aho yūyaṁ sma pūrṇārthā bhavatyo loka-pūjitāḥ

vāsudeve bhagavati yāsām ity arpitaṁ manaḥ

TRANSLATION

Śrī Uddhava said: Certainly you gopīs are all-successful and are universally worshiped because you have dedicated your minds in this way to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vāsudeva.

COMMENTARY

Uddhava said, “Indeed you, whose minds are offered in this way to the Lord, are certainly successful. Other devotees also offer their minds to the Lord, but we do not see their minds offered in this way.”

|| 10.47.24 ||

dāna-vrata-tapo-homa japa-svādhyāya-saṁyamaiḥ

śreyobhir vividhaiś cānyaiḥ kṛṣṇe bhaktir hi sādhyate

TRANSLATION

Devotional service unto Lord Kṛṣṇa is attained by charity, strict vows, austerities and fire sacrifices, by japa, study of Vedic texts, observance of regulative principles and, indeed, by the performance of many other auspicious practices.

COMMENTARY

Devotion to Kṛṣṇa can be awakened by various processes (*sādhana*) such as giving charity, if the only aim and objective is the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa. *Dāna*: means donations given to Lord Viṣṇu and His devotees. *Vrata*: observing vows such as Ekādaśī. *Tapas*: renuncia-tion of sense gratification for Kṛṣṇa’s sake. *Homa*: fire sacrifices dedicated to Viṣṇu. *Japa*: privately chanting the holy names of the Lord. *Svādhyāya*: study and recitation of Vedic texts such as the *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad*. Other auspicious practices, (*śreyobhir vividhaiś cānyaiḥ*), refers to various corollary aspects (*bhakti-angāni*) of devotional service. Since it has already been explained that the other practices, such of charity, austerity and so forth in themselves do not foster devotional service to the Supreme Lord.

|| 10.47.25 ||

bhagavaty uttamaḥ-śloke bhavatībhir anuttamā

bhaktiḥ pravartitā diṣṭyā munīnām api durlabhā

TRANSLATION

By your great fortune you have established an unexcelled standard of pure devotion for the Lord, Uttamaḥśloka—a standard even the sages can hardly attain.

COMMENTARY

Uddhava said to the *gopīs*, "Your *bhakti* is very different from all other types." The term *pravartitā* (establish) indicates that the *gopīs* brought to this world the most excellent (*anuttamā*) standard of pure love of God that was previously unknown on the earth.

Uddhava continued, "However, following in the footsteps of your spontaneous devotional service (*rāgātmikā-bhakti*), *rāgānuga-bhakti* (advanced *sādhana-bhakti* with attachment) will be spread as a practice in the future. This is for the good fortune (*diṣṭyā*) of the people in general."

|| 10.47.26 ||

diṣṭyā putrān patīn dehān sva-janān bhavanāni ca

hitvāvṛnīta yūyaṁ yat kṛṣṇākhyaṁ puruṣaṁ param

TRANSLATION

By your great fortune you have left your sons, husbands, bodily comforts, relatives and homes in favor of the supreme male, who is known as Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

Uddhava said, "It is my good fortune that you have given up your sense of possessiveness toward your husbands, homes and families, and accepted the supreme male named Kṛṣṇa as your enjoyer."

|| 10.47.27 ||

sarvātma-bhāvo 'dhikṛto bhavatīnām adhokṣaje

viraheṇa mahā-bhāgā mahān me 'nugrahaḥ kṛtaḥ

TRANSLATION

You have rightfully claimed the privilege of unalloyed love for the transcendental Lord, O most glorious gopīs. Indeed, by exhibiting your love for Kṛṣṇa in separation from Him, you have shown me great mercy.

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs* replied to Uddhava, “How is it fortunate for you that we have given up wealth and family to accept Kṛṣṇa, the supreme male?”

Uddhava answers in this verse: “Pure love for Kṛṣṇa, who cannot be perceived by the material senses (*adhokṣaje*), is very rarely attained. You, however, have whole-hearted love (*sarvātma-bhāvo*) for Kṛṣṇa, which is perfectly complete and manifest in all its true aspects. In other words, you possess *mahābhāva*. Just as the sun spreads to all by transference of heat and the moon spreads itself to all people by transference of coolness, so *mahābhāva* spreads itself to all people by transference of its own nature.”

In this verse, the combination of the words *sarvātma* (complete) and *bhāva* (emotion) reveals the characteristics of *mahābhāva*. *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇī* defines *mahābhāva* thus: “When *anurāga* (fifth stage of *kṛṣṇa-prema*) attains states of being conscious of only itself, of its own taste while clearly manifesting various *sāttvika-bhāvas*, and reaches its maximum possible state, it is called *mahābhāva*.”

Uddhava said, “*Mahābhāva* is the seventh level of *kṛṣṇa-prema*, and it manifests in you *gopīs* and in no one else, not even Lakṣmī. What is it like? It is a special privilege (*krtaḥ:adhikāra*) which has been given by Kṛṣṇa to you women alone and no one else. By your manifestation of love in separation, you have mercifully shown me all the various aspects of *mahābhāva*, such as *citra jalpa* and *divyonmāda*. If you had not experienced separation from Kṛṣṇa, He would have never sent me here, and I would never have seen this great wonder.” In this way Uddhava describes the extent of his good fortune.

|| 10.47.28 ||

śrūyatāṁ priya-sandeśo bhavatīnāṁ sukhāvahaḥ

yam ādāyāgato bhadrā ahaṁ bhartū rahas-karaḥ

TRANSLATION

My good ladies, now please hear your beloved’s message, which I, the confidential servant of my master, have come here to bring you.

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs* replied, “O Uddhava! In speaking about *mahābhāva* what is the use of praising us and yourself? You came here to pacify us, so do you have some message from Kṛṣṇa which can remove our sorrow? If you have, please tell us.”

Uddhava replies in this verse: “As the executor of confidential duties (*rahas-karaḥ*) for my master, I have brought a message from your beloved which will bring you happiness. So please listen!”

|| 10.47.29 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

bhavatīnāṁ viyogo me na hi sarvātmanā kvacit

yathā bhūtāni bhūteṣu khaṁ vāyv-agnir jalaṁ mahī

tathāhaṁ ca manaḥ-prāṇa-bhūtendriya-guṇāśrayaḥ

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord said: You are never actually separated from Me, for I am the Soul of all creation. Just as the elements of nature—ether, air, fire, water and earth—are present in every created thing, so I am present within everyone’s mind, life air and senses, and also within the physical elements and the modes of material nature.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa’s first message, which gives instructions in philosophical knowledge, acts to reveal the unassailable strength of the *gopīs’ prema* to the most intelligent scholars, and to hide the greatness of their love from the dull minded.

Kṛṣṇa said, “Through Uddhava I am giving the *gopīs* the nectar of knowledge, but it could not extinguish the fire of their love. Rather that knowledge got consumed by the heat of that fire. Just see the power of their love. The *gopīs’ prema* has been proven the strongest, because it has rendered useless the *jñāna-yoga* taught by Me, the Lord of the mind and *yoga*.”

It is the same as the beginning of the *rāsa* dance wherein Kṛṣṇa’s instructions on *karma-yoga* revealed the strength of the *gopīs’prema* to the confidential devotees. At the same time Kṛṣṇa covered the true glories of their love from fools who presume themselves to be great scholars. Kṛṣṇa cleverly made these “so called scholars” think, “The Supreme Lord, the benefactor of all, has imparted transcen-dental knowledge to the *gopīs*, who possess the highest category of love for Him, to make it possible for them to attain liberation.”

Due to the extreme confidentiality of this subject, Kṛṣṇa nourishes the wise devotees by bestowing upon them the nectar of *prema*, while cheating the nondevotees by giving them intoxicating liquor. Thus this verse serves a dual purpose like the Mohinī incarnation, who behaved differently in relation to the devotees and the demons.

Now let us continue with the explanation of the verse. "The Supreme Lord said" (*srī-bhagavān uvāca*) are Uddhava's words. The reason is as follows: Uddhava thought, "Though I have great love for Kṛṣṇa, I find it difficult to understand the meaning of His words. Therefore I will reveal the Lord's message to the gopīs as if He were directly saying it, keeping the ambiguity of His message intact."

Kṛṣṇa said, "O *gopīs*! You are never separated from Me, so why are you crying over and over again with a wish die?"

The *gopīs* responded, "How are You never separate from us?"

Kṛṣṇa's message [sent through Uddhava]: "I am never separated from you because I am the Supersoul pervading all beings. All the revealed scriptures, the great sages like Gargamuni and the demigods such as Varuṇa say this. Therefore I am always present as the Supersoul within your bodies, which means that you are never separated from Me."

In this statement, as with Kṛṣṇa's instructions on *dharma* at the beginning of the *rāsa* dance, there are hidden instructions on conjugal dealings in order to prevent the *gopīs* from criticizing Him later. Indeed, the day after the *rāsa-līlā*, the *gopīs* criticized Kṛṣṇa saying, "O crest jewel among lusty boys! Why did you give us instructions on morality on the night of the *rāsa* dance?"

Kṛṣṇa replied, "O ignorant girls! On that day I was actually giving you instructions on how to enjoy amorous affairs with Me. How did you foolish girls ever conclude that I was teaching about moral principles?" Saying this, Kṛṣṇa then explained the second meaning, as discussing conjugal union, of such statements as *rajany esā ghora-rūpā* (SB 10.29.19).

Now in the same way, after being separated from Kṛṣṇa for a long time, at their future reunion the *gopīs* might say, "O Lord of our lives! Why did you send Uddhava to instruct in philosophy when we were dying in separation from You?"

Anticipating that, Kṛṣṇa answers, “O unintelligent girls! I had Uddhava instruct you only in the methods of pure love. How did you conclude that I was teaching about *jñāna*?”

Kṛṣṇa then proceeds to give another explanation of the present verse which indicates *prema* not *jñāna*. “Your separation from Me is not separation in a complete sense, but it is only in terms of the body. Since the word *ātmā* refers to “body,” “mind,” “intelligence” and “soul,” and since pure love is a function of the *ātmā*, My *ātmā*, in the sense of soul, intelligence, mind and senses, is still residing among you all. It was merely My body which I took to Mathurā. Similarly, your senses, intelligence and mind (*ātmā*) reside with me in Mathurā, and only your bodies remain in Vraja.”

“All scriptures proclaim that I am subservient to pure love. I am not independent in the matter of love. Thus the separation between you and Me, who have a bond of *prema*, exists only in the separation of our bodies, and this gives rise the sentiments of suffering in separation. Now using that vehicle of separation, *prema* desires to increase itself to the utmost. Thus, even though I have great longing, how can I immediately bring My body to Vraja? But when that *prema*, upon reaching its desired level and exhibiting the mood of full separation, ascends to the stage of direct union, only then will I, being dependent on that *prema*, be obliged to bring My body to Vraja.” By this Kṛṣṇa implies that their bodily separation will disappear in the future.

The external meaning of the second part of the verse is as follows: “But I am present in all beings, since I am the ingredient cause of creation. Within all moving and nonmoving beings are the gross physical elements (*bhūtāni*). As the supreme cause of everything, I am also the shelter of everything. In other words, I am present in each and every thing, having entered into them.”

For the *gopīs*, this part of the verse means: “I take shelter of the mind, life air, intelligence, senses and words of you, who are always meditating upon Me in pure love. Taking shelter in each of these, I manifest Myself and thus am always present with you.”

|| 10.47.30 ||

ātmany evātmanātmānaṁ sṛje hanmy anupālaye

ātma-māyānubhāvena bhūtendriya-guṇātmanā

TRANSLATION

By Myself I create, sustain and withdraw Myself within Myself by the power of My personal energy, which comprises the material elements, the senses and the modes of nature.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “Furthermore, I am the subject doing action, the location of action and the object of action. Upon the substratum of Myself, I create the universe which is Myself.”

The *gopīs* replied, “But Your form is *sac-cid-ānanda* (full of eternity, knowledge and bliss) and this universe appears to be different than that.”

Kṛṣṇa replied, “The universe is created from My *māyā-śakti*, which in turn creates all the material elements. Though the external energy, *māyā-śakti*, is one of My forms, it is not My original personal form (*svarūpa*).”

For the *gopīs* the meaning is as follows: “I make My appearance (*ātmānaṁ-sṛje*) in your minds (*ātmani*) by My own effort (*ātmanā*) for the sake of conjugal union and other pastimes. I maintain (*anupālaye*) that form for a moment, and then I make that form disappear (*hanmi*).”

The *gopīs* ask, “By what particular effort do You do this?”

Kṛṣṇa: “I accomplish this by the power of My *yogamāyā* (*ātma-māyā-anubhāvena*).”

Gopīs: “What is the nature of the self (*ātmānam*) that You make appear?”

Kṛṣṇa: “It is that form with all My limbs (*bhūtani*); My senses (*indriya*) such as eyes; and My qualities (*guṇa*) such as beauty, sweetness, cleverness and intelligence (*ātmā*).” All of these comprise Kṛṣṇa’s ātmā, thus the compound which they comprise is expressed in the singular number.

|| 10.47.31 ||

ātmā jñāna-mayaḥ śuddho vyatirikto 'guṇānvayaḥ

suṣupti-svapna-jāgradbhir māyā-vṛttibhir īyate

TRANSLATION

Being composed of pure consciousness, or knowledge, the soul is distinct from everything material and is uninvolved in the entanglements of the modes of nature. We can perceive the soul through the three functions of material nature known as wakefulness, sleep and deep sleep.

COMMENTARY

If the *gopīs* ask, "But then how is that the people in general do not know Your original, true identity?"

Kṛṣṇa answers, "My original form, which is transcendental to the modes of nature, is perceived everywhere as the indwelling Supersoul. The Supersoul possesses pure spiritual knowledge, which is transcendental to the modes of nature and has no connection with them. Though I am the creator, due to My inconceivable power (*acintya-śakti*) I remain pure, and never directly contact the material modes of nature. Though forever existing within the material bodies, the Supersoul remains distinct (*vyatirikta*). Moreover, even though I am the controller of the modes of nature, I am not involved (*anvayaḥ*) with them. The Supersoul can be inferred through the material functions of the mind during waking, sleeping and dreaming."

This point is confirmed in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (SB 10.2.35):

> *sattvaṁ na ced dhātar idaṁ nijaṁ bhaved*
>
> *vijñānam ajñāna-bhidāpamārjanam*
>
> *guṇa-prakāśair anumīyate bhavān*
>
> *prakāśate yasya ca yena vā guṇaḥ*
>
> "O Lord, cause of all causes, if Your transcendental body were not beyond the modes of material nature, one could not understand the difference between matter and transcendence. Only by Your presence can one understand the transcendental nature of Your Lordship, who are the controller of material nature.

Your transcendental nature is very difficult to understand unless one is influenced by the presence of Your transcendental form."

bhagavān sarva-bhūteṣu, laksitaḥ svātmanā hariḥ

dṛśyair buddhy-ādibhir draṣṭā, lakṣanair anumāpakaiḥ

"The Personality of Godhead Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is in every living being along with the individual soul. And this fact is perceived and hypothesized in our acts of seeing and taking help from the intelligence." (SB 2.2.35)

The meaning for the *gopīs* is as follows: "Though residing in Mathurā, I (*ātmā*), being full of knowledge (*jñāna-maya*), am always conscious of you and never forget you. Even though present here, I am free from any fault (*śuddha*) of associating with the women of Mathurā, because I remain aloof (*vyatiriktaḥ*). I am severely pained by My separation from you, so how could I get pleasure from any other women? I continually dwell on your qualities (*guṇa-ānvayaḥ*) such as your tender beauty and sweet sidelong glances."

"Similarly, you can also always perceive Me with your mental faculties during the three states of sleeping, dreaming and waking. In deep sleep (*suṣuptī*) you can perceive My general form and qualities as the Paramātmā. In dreams (*svapna*) You can perceive My particular form and qualities. And in waking consciousness (*jāgradbhir*) you can perceive Me directly with the full manifestation of My laughing, dancing and other characteristics of the sweet pleasures of union (*sambhoga-mādhuryam*)."

|| 10.47.32 ||

yenendriyārthān dhyāyeta mṛṣā svapna-vad utthitaḥ

tan nirundhyād indriyāṇi vinidraḥ pratyapadyata

TRANSLATION

As a person just arisen from sleep may continue to meditate on a dream even though it is illusory, so by the agency of the mind one meditates on the sense objects, which the senses can then obtain. Therefore one should become fully alert and bring the mind under control.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “This *jñāna-yoga* which I have imparted bears fruit when the mind is restrained.” This verse proposes control of the mind.

“In the waking state a man meditates on material objects in his mind. While dreaming as well, by the mind he meditates on dream objects, even though they are false. Thus, the mind and senses should be restrained. After all, a person who is careful and alert *vinidraḥ* (*sāvadhānaḥ*) obtains (*pratyapadyata*) knowledge, as is evidenced by the saintly behavior of persons in the past.”

For the *gopīs* this means: “Waking from a swooning condition (*utthitaḥ:mūrcchataḥ prabuddhaḥ*), persons like yourselves should reject as an unreliable source of knowledge that mind by which they meditate on the objects of the senses such as seeing Me, touching Me, drinking the nectar of My lips and embracing Me. Although these are real because they come from My actual appearance in this world, they are yet false as in a dream state. This is because upon giving up your sleeping (*vinidraḥ*) condition you appeared with eyes and other senses devoid of mascara, eye coloring or sandalwood paste. I understand that though I gave you all sorts of enjoyment, you consider all that enjoyment false, due to being blinded by loving attraction to Me, and having lost all discretion because of your excessive anxiety of separation. All this gives Me great unhappiness. Therefore, I have sent this message to convince you of the reality of all of these pastimes we performed.”

|| 10.47.33 ||

etad-antaḥ samāmnāyo yogaḥ sāṅkhyaṁ manīṣiṇām

tyāgas tapo damaḥ satyaṁ samudrāntā ivāpagāḥ

TRANSLATION

According to intelligent authorities, this is the ultimate conclusion of all the Vedas, as well as all practice of yoga, Sāṅkhya, renunciation, austerity, sense control and truthfulness, just as the sea is the ultimate destination of all rivers.

COMMENTARY

“All the methods described in all the scriptures have as their purpose control of the mind.” That is the import of this verse.

Kṛṣṇa said, “Control of the mind is the conclusion (*etad-antaḥ*) of all the Vedas (*samāmnayo:sampūrṇo vedaḥ*). And this is sufficient to make one successful in life. *Aṣṭāṅga-yoga*, discriminating spirit from matter (Sāṅkhya), renunciation (*tyāgas:*

sannyāsa), following one's prescribed duty (*tapo:sva-dharma*), and subduing the senses (*damaḥ*) are different methods, but they all lead to the same place, namely control of the mind, just as all rivers lead to the ocean."

For the *gopīs* this means: "As one transcends material existence by controlling the mind, similarly, you can transcend the pain of separation from Me by mind control. It is the uncontrolled mind that makes you perceive your association with Me as illusory, even though it is real."

The meaning of the words is the same in both these interpretations.

|| 10.47.34 ||

yat tv ahaṁ bhavatīnāṁ vai dūre varte priyo dṛśām

manasaḥ sannikarṣārthaṁ mad-anudhyāna-kāmyayā

TRANSLATION

But the actual reason why I, the beloved object of your sight, have stayed far away from you is that I wanted to intensify your meditation upon Me and thus draw your minds closer to Me.

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs* said, "O Uddhava, by this news from Kṛṣṇa you have doubled our pain. Therefore should we call the sender of this message ignorant of the proper time, place and person? Or should we criticize you instead for being so thoughtless? You have brought this burden of *brahma-jñāna* this far, but who will buy it in Vraja? Can the *gopīs*, who from birth have been drinking the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's beauty, now drink the bitter neem sap of *brahma-jñāna*? It is better that the women of this place give up their lives if only such an abominable thing is available as food; better they die of starvation."

"Now just listen, you great fool! Just listen! This *brahma-jñāna*, which is found in the leaf huts of the hearts of great saintly physicians, is the medicinal herb that can certainly cure the disease of material existence. But can it cure the grave disease of *kṛṣṇa-prema*? Did those doctors ever research this disease? After learning the science of medicine from Sāndīpani Muni, Kṛṣṇa has taught you and then sent you to us with the herbal cure to relieve the great fever of *prema*. You can now be our messenger Uddhava, and take

this medicine back to its sender. Drinking it, Kṛṣṇa will extinguish His fever of *prema* for us. Make sure that no trace of fever remains. As for us, may our great fever of *prema* remain for a hundred births!”

“And if you have no such herb with you, then what can be done? Alas, can the torrents of rain that will put out a forest fire extinguish the fire of lightning? If we find within Kṛṣṇa’s message something a little favorable to us, is that His intention or is it just an accident? We cannot place any faith in Him.”

After the *gopīs* spoke in this angry mood, Uddhava answered: “O ladies, just listen to me for one moment with attention. I have brought you another message apart from this knowledge of Brahman (*brahma-jñāna*).” Then Uddhava related Kṛṣṇa’s statements, which the *gopīs* heard with great faith and eagerness.

The general meaning of Kṛṣṇa’s message is as follows: “That I who am so attractive to your eyes am now situated far away from them is simply out of My desire to increase your meditation on Me. By that meditation your minds are drawn to Me. Therefore, now I am very close to your minds.”

The following is also implied simultaneously: “You *gopīs* are also extremely attractive to My eyes, and thus since you are now far from My eyes, please remain near to My mind. Thus it is deduced that an object of attraction is far from the mind when it is in the vicinity of one’s eyes and near the mind when it is far from the eyes. Of the two, the mind is more important. Therefore, I desire that you remain close to My mind. May that be your desire as well.”

|| 10.47.35 ||

yathā dūra-care preṣṭhe mana āviśya vartate

strīṇāṁ ca na tathā cetaḥ sannikṛṣṭe ’kṣi-gocare

TRANSLATION

When her lover is far away, a woman thinks of him more than when he is present before her.

COMMENTARY

This verse considers the relative importance of feeling with the heart and seeing with the eyes. *Ca* (and) indicates that this example holds true for men as well as women. Like women, men become more absorbed in thinking of a beloved woman when she is far away than when she is present before their eyes.

|| 10.47.36 ||

mayy āveśya manaḥ kṛtsnaṁ vimuktāśeṣa-vṛtti yat

anusmarantyo māṁ nityam acirān mām upaiṣyatha

TRANSLATION

Because your minds are totally absorbed in Me and free from all other engagement, you remember Me always, and so you will very soon have Me again in your presence.

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs* said, “Oh Uddhava, this message also you should keep in the treasure box of your heart. Though now Kṛṣṇa is enjoying the women of Mathurā, sometime in the future He will be far from their eyes. At that time you can give this message to them. But right now, this message is unacceptable to the women of Vraja. Previously, even when Kṛṣṇa was present here and visible to our eyes, and then was absent for a moment, that moment felt like a hundred *yugas*. During each minute of that period of absence the gopīs would have drawn Kṛṣṇa into their minds with thousand-fold feelings of separation.”

When the *gopīs* spoke sarcastically in this way, Uddhava replied, “O women, if this message does not appeal to you, then hear another message from me. I have brought many messages.”

Again Uddhava delivered Kṛṣṇa’s words to them as mentioned in this verse. Uddhava said, “As you have completely rejected (*vimukta*) objects like house and husband, and absorbed your minds in constant remembrance of Me, very soon you will attain My personal presence.”

|| 10.47.37 ||

yā mayā krīḍatā rātryāṁ vane 'smin vraja āsthitāḥ

alabdha-rāsāḥ kalyāṇyo māpur mad-vīrya-cintayā

TRANSLATION

Although some gopīs had to remain in the cowherd village and so could not join the rāsa dance to sport with Me at night in the forest, they were nonetheless fortunate. Indeed, they attained Me by thinking of My potent pastimes.

COMMENTARY

This verse gives proof of Kṛṣṇa's personal presence when some *gopīs* were locked in their houses by their husbands on the night of the *rāsa* dance, as described in a previous verse.

Kṛṣṇa's message said, "Why were some *gopīs* not able to sport with Me (*krīdatā mayā*) on the night of the *rāsa-līlā* in Vṛndāvana? They were forcibly kept back in their homes in Vraja (*vraja āsthitāḥ*) by their husbands. Although they wanted to die because their desires could not be fulfilled, and because they experienced great pain in separation from Me, still they were very fortunate (*kalyāṇyaḥ*). Thus remaining alive they attained Me by remembering the *rāsa* dance and other pastimes of Mine. In other words, I appeared directly before them in their homes in Vraja, and enjoyed pastimes with them during that night. After that, on other nights, they entered the *rāsa* dance on the bank of the Yamunā."

|| 10.47.38 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

evaṁ priyatamādiṣṭam ākarṇya vraja-yoṣitaḥ

tā ūcur uddhavaṁ prītās tat-sandeśāgata-smṛtīḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: The women of Vraja were pleased to hear this message from their dearmost Kṛṣṇa. His words having revived their memory, they addressed Uddhava as follows.

COMMENTARY

This verse was spoken by the *gopīs* mentioned in the previous verse, who had been trapped in their houses.

The *gopīs* said, “Uddhava, it’s true! During that night we enjoyed with Kṛṣṇa.” After hearing from Uddhava, these *gopīs* remembered their own experiences which were proof of his words. They then became satisfied with Uddhava and talked politely with him.

|| 10.47.39 ||

gopya ūcuḥ

diṣṭyāhito hataḥ kaṁso yadūnāṁ sānugo ’gha-kṛt

diṣṭyāptair labdha-sarvārthaiḥ kuśaly āste ’cyuto ’dhunā

TRANSLATION

The gopīs said: It is very good that Kaṁsa, the enemy and persecutor of the Yadus, has now been killed, along with his followers. And it is also very good that Lord Acyuta is living happily in the company of His well-wishing friends and relatives, whose every desire is now fulfilled.

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs* said, “It is good (*diṣṭyā*) that the enemy (*ahitaḥ*) has been killed.”

|| 10.47.40 ||

kaccid gadāgrajaḥ saumya karoti pura-yoṣitām

prītiṁ naḥ snigdha-savrīḍa-hāsodārekṣaṇārcitaḥ

TRANSLATION

Gentle Uddhava, is the elder brother of Gada now bestowing on the city women the pleasure that actually belongs to us? We suppose those ladies worship Him with generous glances full of affectionate, shy smiles.

COMMENTARY

Some *gopīs*, other than those who were prevented from going to the *rāsa-līlā*, then spoke with jealousy in this verse. The name Gadāgraja indicates Kṛṣṇa, the elder brother (*agraja*) of Gada, the first son of Devarakṣitā, a sister of Devakī's who was also married Vasudeva. By addressing Kṛṣṇa in this way, the gopīs indicate that He now thinks of Himself mostly as the son of Devakī. The implication is that Kṛṣṇa's connection with Vṛndāvana has now slackened.

The jealous gopīs said, "We worshiped Kṛṣṇa with our pleasing, shy smiles and generous glances. Is He now stimulating the love of the women of Mathurā with His bold glances? Is He worshiping them? O Śiva! Śiva! Although that glance is meant to be worshiped by us, it has become their worshiper. This is our great misfortune!"

|| 10.47.41 ||

kathaṁ rati-viśeṣa-jñaḥ priyaś ca pura-yoṣitām

nānubadhyeta tad-vākyair vibhramaiś cānubhājitaḥ

TRANSLATION

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is expert in all kinds of conjugal affairs and is the darling of the city women. How can He not become entangled, now that He's constantly adored by their enchanting words and gestures?

COMMENTARY

"O foolish women, why are you asking the same question again? You should have no doubt about this." In this way, other *gopīs* spoke sarcastically with concealed anger.

The *gopīs* said, "Because Kṛṣṇa knows everything about love affairs, He has become the darling of the women of Mathurā. So how will He not become attached to them? Being constantly worshiped (*anubhajitaḥ*) by their words and services, Kṛṣṇa will respond to them, and be forced to render service to them also. Therefore, we village women have no special conjugal attraction (*rati-viśeṣa*) to offer Him, that most exalted person. We are not skilled in the use of such polite words and proper gestures. Thus we have rightly concluded that Kṛṣṇa has abandoned us on attaining the cultured women of Mathurā." This they imply in their inquiry.

|| 10.47.42 ||

api smarati naḥ sādho govindaḥ prastute kvacit

goṣṭhi-madhye pura-strīṇām grāmyāḥ svaira-kathāntare

TRANSLATION

O saintly one, does Govinda ever remember us during His conversations with the city women? Does He ever mention us village girls as He freely talks with them?

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs* said, “Surely Kṛṣṇa has abandoned us because we deserve to be abandoned. Indeed, we are the most insignificant women in the world and have been rejected after having been enjoyed. Still, do we sometimes enter into Kṛṣṇa’s memory on account of some good quality of ours, or even because of something we did wrong? Kṛṣṇa must speak very freely with the city women.”

“He and they must sing, joke, make riddles and talk about so many things. Does Kṛṣṇa ever say, ‘My dear city women, your sophisticated singing and speech is unknown to the gopīs in My home village. They couldn’t understand these things.’ Does He ever speak about us even in that way?”

|| 10.47.43 ||

tāḥ kiṁ niśāḥ smarati yāsu tadā priyābhir

vṛndāvane kumuda-kunda-śaśāṅka-ramye

reme kvaṇac-caraṇa-nūpura-rāsa-goṣṭhyām

asmābhir īḍita-manojña-kathaḥ kadācit

TRANSLATION

Does He recall those nights in the Vṛndāvana forest, lovely with lotus, jasmine and the bright moon? As we glorified His charming pastimes, He enjoyed with us, His beloved girlfriends, in the circle of the rāsa dance, which resounded with the music of ankle bells.

COMMENTARY

“O dear *gopīs*! What is the use of criticizing Kṛṣṇa and the women of Mathurā with crooked words? Why don’t you speak straight-forwardly? Due to the loving expertise of other women and our own misfortune Kṛṣṇa may indeed forget us, but how can He have forgotten His own place of residence?”

In this way some *gopīs* spoke while crying: “In the charming forest of Vṛndāvana along the Yamunā’s banks, which were splendorous with brilliant white lotuses, jasmines and moonlight, Kṛṣṇa enjoyed with us at the rāsa arena, which resounded with the sounds of ankle bells. Where is there such a river bank in Mathurā? Where else is the music, song and dance so pleasing to Kṛṣṇa? The intimate talks we had with Kṛṣṇa were praised by the heavenly women riding in their airplanes. Do the vile women of Mathurā know any such conversations with Him? Who in Mathurā knows how to make unguents, flower crowns, garlands, and betel-nut preparations for Kṛṣṇa’s pleasure?”

“By remaining in Mathurā, Kṛṣṇa’s happiness has completely disappeared. We will die in disappointment just thinking of Kṛṣṇa’s lack of bliss. If there were some woman in Mathurā like us who could please Kṛṣṇa, then He could enjoy dancing with her, playing His flute and other pastimes. If we heard that such a woman existed, then we could remain in Vṛndāvana happily, even though separate from Kṛṣṇa.”

|| 10.47.44 ||

apy eṣyatīha dāśārhas taptāḥ sva-kṛtayā śucā

sañjīvayan nu no gātrair yathendro vanam ambudaiḥ

TRANSLATION

Will that descendant of Daśārha return here and by the touch of His limbs bring back to life those who are now burning with the grief He Himself has caused? Will He save us in that way, just as Lord Indra brings a forest back to life with his water-bearing clouds?

COMMENTARY

One gopī said, “O sakhīs! Because Kṛṣṇa is unhappy, He will immediately return here.”

Believing this, another gopī said, “Will Kṛṣṇa really come to Vraja and bring us, who are burning up with grief because of Him, back to life with the touch of His beautiful hand?”

|| 10.47.45 ||

kasmāt kṛṣṇa ihāyāti prāpta-rājyo hatāhitaḥ

narendra-kanyā udvāhya prītaḥ sarva-suhṛd-vṛtaḥ

TRANSLATION

But why should Kṛṣṇa come here after winning a kingdom, killing His enemies and marrying the daughters of kings? He's satisfied there, surrounded by all His friends and well-wishers.

COMMENTARY

Hearing this, one obstinate gopī of the "left-wing" (*vāmya*) nature spoke. "Hey sakhīs, foolish women! You do not know at all what happiness Kṛṣṇa gets during the *rāsa* dance. Hear from me what type of happiness He likes!"

Expressing herself in such crooked words, she speaks this verse: "Why will Kṛṣṇa return to Vraja? Here Kṛṣṇa has to undergo the hardships of tending the cows, and there in Mathurā He has obtained a kingdom. Here, Kṛṣṇa can only sport with women from the cowherd caste, and there He can enjoy with ladies of noble descent. So what happiness can Kṛṣṇa enjoy here? Here, Kṛṣṇa is cowherd boy, there Kṛṣṇa is a king. And after some time Kṛṣṇa will get married there."

This refers to Kṛṣṇa's marrying Rukmiṇī while living in Mathurā, which occurred during some other day of Brahmā, according to the *Purāṇas*. Further, the *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* 2.48 says:

> *prāpya mathurāṁ pūriṁ ramyāṁ, sadā brahmadi sevitām*
>
> *saṅkha-cakra-gadā-śārṇga-, rakṣitāṁ muṣalādibbhiḥ,*
>
> *yatrāsau saṁsthitaḥ kṛṣṇas, tribhiḥ saktyā samāhitaḥ rāmāniruddha-pradyumnai, rukmiṇyā sahito vibhuḥ*

> "Śrī Kṛṣṇa, accompanied by His three potencies, and by Balarāma, Aniruddha, Pradyumna, and Rukmiṇī, stays in delightful Mathurā Puri, which is worshiped by

Brahmā and the other demigods and protected by the conch, *cakra*, club, and *śārṇga* bow."

|| 10.47.46 ||

kim asmābhir vanaukobhir anyābhir vā mahātmanaḥ

śrī-pater āpta-kāmasya kriyetārthaḥ kṛtātmanaḥ

TRANSLATION

The great soul Kṛṣṇa is the Lord of the goddess of fortune, and He automatically achieves whatever He desires. How can we forest-dwellers or any other women fulfill His purposes when He is already fulfilled within Himself?

COMMENTARY

"O sakhīs! Give up this jealousy and enmity toward Kṛṣṇa, who is completely devoid of love for us." One gopī thus spoke about Kṛṣṇa's indifference towards everything.

It may be questioned, "Since Kṛṣṇa is the master of the goddess of fortune, doesn't He in fact have love for her?" No, because Kṛṣṇa is *āpta-kāmasya* (fulfilled in all desires) and *kṛtātmanaḥ* (self-complete); for Him who is complete by nature what need does He have for Lakṣmī? Therefore there is no princess in Mathurā suitable to marry Him." This confidential truth is being subtly implied to Uddhava.

|| 10.47.47 ||

paraṁ saukhyaṁ hi nairāśyaṁ svairiṇy apy āha piṅgalā

taj jānatīnāṁ naḥ kṛṣṇe tathāpy āśā duratyayā

TRANSLATION

Indeed, the greatest happiness is to renounce all desires, as even the prostitute Piṅgalā has declared. Yet even though we know this, we cannot give up our hopes of attaining Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

One gopī replied, “Therefore you should give up all hopes of attaining Kṛṣṇa.”

Another gopī said, “But we cannot give Him up (*duratyayā*) under any circumstance.”

First gopī: “It is difficult for anyone to give up hope concerning Kṛṣṇa. Piṅgalā had desires for men other than Kṛṣṇa, and therefore she could give up those desires.”

|| 10.47.48 ||

ka utsaheta santyaktum uttamaḥśloka-saṁvidam

anicchato ’pi yasya śrīr aṅgān na cyavate kvacit

TRANSLATION

Who can bear to give up intimate talks with Lord Uttamaḥśloka? Although He shows no interest in her, Goddess Śrī never moves from her place on His chest.

COMMENTARY

One gopī said, “Though a greedy man may not attain his desired object, he does not give up the desire for the object. Who can bear to give up the experience of Kṛṣṇa’s (Uttamaḥśloka) beauty and sweetness (*samvidam: saundarya-mādhuryādy-upalabdhim*)? No one at all! Though Lakṣmī, the goddess of fortune, is ignored by Kṛṣṇa, she does not give up His chest, but remains there always in the form of a golden line.”

|| 10.47.49 ||

saric-chaila-vanoddeśā gāvo veṇu-ravā ime

saṅkarṣaṇa-sahāyena kṛṣṇenācaritāḥ prabho

TRANSLATION

Dear Uddhava Prabhu, when Kṛṣṇa was here in the company of Saṅkarṣaṇa, He enjoyed all these rivers, hills, forests, cows and flute sounds.

|| 10.47.50 ||

punaḥ punaḥ smārayanti nanda-gopa-sutaṁ bata

śrī-niketais tat-padakair vismartuṁ naiva śaknumaḥ

TRANSLATION

All these remind us constantly of Nanda's son. Indeed, because we see Kṛṣṇa's footprints, which are marked with divine symbols, we can never forget Him.

COMMENTARY

One gopī said, "When the memory of a desired object vanishes, the hopes for it also vanish. However, that will never happen with us, because we can never forget Kṛṣṇa." This is expressed in three verses (49-51).

A gopī said, "The rivers, hills, forests, cows and flute were resorted to or utilized regularly (*ācaritāḥ*) by Kṛṣṇa. We cannot forget Kṛṣṇa because we see His footprints marked with the divine symbols of a flag and thunderbolt remaining in the earth and stones."

|| 10.47.51 ||

gatyā lalitayodāra-hāsa-līlāvalokanaiḥ

mādhvyā girā hṛta-dhiyaḥ kathaṁ taṁ vismarāma he

TRANSLATION

O Uddhava, how can we forget Him when our hearts have been stolen away by the charming way He walks, His generous smile and playful glances, and His honeylike words?

COMMENTARY

Uddhava suggested, "If you keep remembering Kṛṣṇa by looking at the rivers, mountains and forests of Vraja, then bind a cloth around your eyes, use your intelligence to lead your minds to some other thought, and thus forget Kṛṣṇa."

A gopī replies, "O Uddhava! It is not possible to forget Kṛṣṇa because we no longer possess our intelligence, since Kṛṣṇa has taken it away by His supreme beauty, charm, and honey-sweet words (*mādhvyā girā*)."

|| 10.47.52 ||

he nātha he ramā-nātha vraja-nāthārti-nāśana

magnam uddhara govinda gokulaṁ vṛjinārṇavāt

TRANSLATION

O master, O master of the goddess of fortune, O master of Vraja! O destroyer of all suffering, Govinda, please lift Your Gokula out of the ocean of distress in which it is drowning!

COMMENTARY

In this verse the *gopīs*' feelings become so strong that they disregard Uddhava and, turning toward Mathurā, call out to Kṛṣṇa in pitiful voices: "O Kṛṣṇa (in this text the first phrase is *he nātha he ramā-nātha*), You attract our minds, even though we are unworthy! O lord of Lakṣmī (*ramā-nātha*), we also need to be mastered. O great reservoir of amazing sweetness and tasteful loving reciprocations, which are begged for (*nathyamana*) even by Lakṣmī! O master of Vraja (*vraja-nātha*), Vraja needs Your shelter."

"O remover of suffering (*ārti-nāśana*), in the past You performed many inconceivable pastimes to protect us, such as lifting Govardhana Hill to free us from the distress caused by Indra. Now, however, we are in an ocean of the most intense suffering (*vṛjina-arṇavāt*) caused by separation from You. Please come of Your own accord and save Gokula which will be destroyed either today or tomorrow. O Govinda, come resume Your duties of protecting the cows and supervising their grazing; enough with this sending of messengers!"

|| 10.47.53 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

tatas tāḥ kṛṣṇa-sandeśair vyapeta-viraha-jvarāḥ

uddhavaṁ pūjayāṁ cakrur jñātvātmānam adhokṣajam

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: Lord Kṛṣṇa's messages having relieved their fever of separation, the gopīs then worshiped Uddhava, recognizing him as nondifferent from their Lord, Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.47.54 ||

uvāsa katicin māsān gopīnāṁ vinudan śucaḥ

kṛṣṇa-līlā-kathāṁ gāyan ramayām āsa gokulam

TRANSLATION

Uddhava remained there for several months, dispelling the gopīs' sorrow by chanting the topics of Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. Thus he brought joy to all the people of Gokula.

COMMENTARY

When out of sorrow the *gopīs*' hopes for Kṛṣṇa's return grew dim, and they became eager to give up their lives, Uddhava made them happy by speaking yet other messages, even more confidential. That is the significance of the word "after that" (*tatas*). Though Śukadeva Gosvāmī has not explicitly described those messages, one can understand them by the results they had on the *gopīs*.

Kṛṣṇa said [message], "O you who are as dear to Me as life, while you are standing before My messenger Uddhava just close your eyes. Just as the cowherd boys closed their eyes and were delivered from the forest fire, close your eyes and I will deliver you from the devastating fire of separation. Witness My mystic power!"

Hearing this, the *gopīs* closed their eyes. In a flash of a second, *yogamāyā* compressed millions of years of time into a single moment. Kṛṣṇa then appeared on that spot, and in the company of the *gopīs* enjoyed the *rāsa* dance in the Vṛndāvana forest, playing dice, drinking honey liquor, water sporting and swing pastimes. By enjoying all these pastimes, the *gopīs* forgot all their pains of separation. Seeing that all their limbs were exuberant in ecstasy, Uddhava paused a moment and then said, "Now ladies, open your eyes again." Upon opening their eyes the gopīs felt that they had taken a new birth through the bestowal of a thousand-fold bliss as when they had closed their eyes. Recognizing Uddhava as nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa (*adhokṣaja*), they then worshiped Uddhava. The syllable *adho* in the word *adhokṣajam* means downward (*adhaḥ*); *aksa* means eyes; and *ja* means birth.

Kṛṣṇa said (message), "O women filled with *prema*! If you give up your lives, I will also give up My life upon hearing this news. Don't doubt it! Swearing a thousand times, I declare that you are My very life! Even though I am trying to go to Vraja at every moment, I am unable to do so. Perhaps I am being kept here because the time of the endeavor is not right, or else because the love the Mathurā-vāsīs have for Me is an obstacle."

By such messages the *gopīs*' fever of separation (*viraha-jvarāḥ*) caused by their thinking that Kṛṣṇa had no love for them was completely dispelled (*vyapeta*). Thinking that *adhokṣaja* Kṛṣṇa was afflicted by the pain of separation like themselves (*ātmānam:ātma-tulyam*), or else thinking that Kṛṣṇa was their very life (*ātmānam: ātmā:svā:*own*, anam:prana:*breath), the *gopīs* then worshiped Uddhava.

The *gopīs* said, "O Uddhava, you have spoken well. Now even at the cost of suffering the greatest pain we will remain alive. If you had not given this message we would have certainly died, and everything would have been destroyed. Therefore by saving us you have fulfilled our desire to protect everyone involved, and thus we worship you."

The external meaning that the *gopīs* recognized their own souls (*ātmānam*) as one with the transcendental Lord, the Supersoul, is simply a meaning to bewilder the *asuras*. This is not the real meaning. Indeed, this scriptural passage is just like the Mohinī incarnation in its effect. For the *prema-bhakta*, oneness of the Lord and the *jīva* is insipid. What to speak then how repulsive it would be for the *gopīs*, who are the crest jewel of all unalloyed pure devotees, to think such a thing?

Indeed, Śrīdhara Svāmī, who knows best the purport of advanced scriptures, has stated:

> *tat-kathāmṛta-pāthodhau, viharanto maha-mudaḥ*
>
> *kurvanti kṛtinaḥ kecic, catur-vargaṁ tṛṇopamam*
>
> "Any person who has become mad with bliss by sporting in the nectarean ocean of topics of Kṛṣṇa thinks of the four goals of human life as insignificant as a blade of grass."

It can be seen that even the most potent knowledge of the soul (*ātma-jñāna*) can never cover one who has fully developed *kṛṣṇa-prema*. When Vasudeva and Arjuna saw the *mahāiśvarya* aspect (supreme opulence) of Kṛṣṇa, their parental and friendly relationships became covered by *dāsya-bhakti* (devotion in the mood of servitude), but not by *brahma-jñāna*, knowledge of Brahman. It has been seen that the Vrajavāsīs were merged in *brahma-jñāna*, but this was only to show their distaste for knowledge of Brahman.

“Kṛṣṇa brought the Vrajavāsīs to the lake of Brahman, merged them in it and then brought them out: *te tu brahma-hradam nītā magnāḥ kṛṣṇena coddhṛtāḥ* (SB 10.28.16).” The word *ca-uddhṛtāḥ* (“brought them out” or “delivered them”) is specifically used in the text. Just as living entities are delivered from the ocean of *saṁsāra*, the inhabitants of Vraja were delivered from the repulsive Brahman. Furthermore, if the *gopīs* had developed monistic *ātma-jñāna* (realization of the soul as one with Brahman), then they would not have spoken to Balarāma with such unsettled minds as they did when He later returned to Vraja;

> *gopyo hasantyaḥ papracchū rāma-sandarśanādṛtāḥ*
>
> *kaccid āste sukhaṁ kṛṣṇaḥ pura-strī-jana-vallabhaḥ*
>
> Śukadeva Gosvāmī said, “Honored to have the personal audience of Lord Balarāma, the young gopīs, smiled and asked Him, ‘Is Kṛṣṇa, the darling of the city women, living happily?’” (SB 10.65.9)

“One *gopī* said, ‘It is astonishing that the intelligent women of Mathurā have faith in the words of the ungrateful, fickle hearted Kṛṣṇa.’”

“Another *gopī* said, ‘They must have developed faith in His words because He speaks so wonderfully, and also because His beautiful smiling glances arouse their lust.’” (SB 10.65.13)

Indeed, if the Vraja-gopīs had attained the stage of *brahma-jñāna* they could never speak, as they are going to in the future, such jealous words (as quoted above) indicative of their ignorance of the soul or Brahman.

|| 10.47.55 ||

yāvanty ahāni nandasya vraje ’vātsīt sa uddhavaḥ

vrajaukasāṁ kṣaṇa-prāyāṇy āsan kṛṣṇasya vārtayā

TRANSLATION

All the days that Uddhava dwelled in Nanda’s cowherd village seemed like a single moment to the residents of Vraja, for Uddhava was always discussing Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

How did time pass in a moment (*kṣaṇa-prāyāṇy*) in Uddhava's presence? The name Uddhava means extreme bliss, and besides Kṛṣṇa had also empowered Uddhava with the capacity to bestow bliss on others. Thus time passed in a moment for the Vrajavāsīs, who felt extreme happiness in the association of Uddhava, bliss personified.

|| 10.47.56 ||

sarid-vana-giri-droṇīr vīkṣan kusumitān drumān

kṛṣṇaṁ saṁsmārayan reme hari-dāso vrajaukasām

TRANSLATION

That servant of Lord Hari, seeing the rivers, forests, mountains, valleys and flowering trees of Vraja, enjoyed inspiring the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana by reminding them of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.47.57 ||

dṛṣṭvaivam-ādi gopīnāṁ kṛṣṇāveśātma-viklavam

uddhavaḥ parama-prītas tā namasyann idaṁ jagau

TRANSLATION

Thus seeing how the gopīs were always disturbed because of their total absorption in Kṛṣṇa, Uddhava was supremely pleased. Desiring to offer them all respect, he sang as follows.

COMMENTARY

Having observed the transcendental madness (*viklavam*) of the *gopīs*', who had attained the highest state of loving ecstasy wherein their minds (*ātmā*) were always absorbed in Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa-āvesa*), and having seen their other exalted qualities (*evam-ādi gopīnāṁ*), Uddhava loudly sang (*jagau: uccair*) prayers offering all respect (*namasyann*) to them. According to Śrīdhara Svāmī, Uddhava spoke loudly to show that it was not improper for one of *kṣatriya* birth to pay obeisances to mere cowherd girls.

|| 10.47.58 ||

etāḥ paraṁ tanu-bhṛto bhuvi gopa-vadhvo

govinda eva nikhilātmani rūḍha-bhāvāḥ

vāñchanti yad bhava-bhiyo munayo vayaṁ ca

kiṁ brahma-janmabhir ananta-kathā-rasasya

TRANSLATION

[Uddhava sang:] Among all persons on earth, these cowherd women alone have actually perfected their embodied lives, for they have achieved the perfection of unalloyed love for Lord Govinda. Their pure love is hankered after by those who fear material existence, by great sages, and by ourselves as well. For one who has tasted the narrations of the infinite Lord, what is the use of taking birth as a high-class brāhmaṇa, or even as Lord Brahmā himself?

COMMENTARY

Uddhava describes the outstanding glories of the Vraja-gopīs in five verses (58-62).

Uddhava sang, "The *gopīs* alone have perfected their lives (*tanu-bhṛto*) by achieving *rūḍha-bhāvāḥ* (*mahābhāva*), which those striving for liberation (*bhava-bhiyo*), those who are liberated (*munayo*) and devotees such as I (*vayam ca*) desire but cannot attain. Therefore for one who has attraction (*rasa:rāga*) to the topics of the unlimited (*ananta-kathā*) Lord, what is the use of *brahminical* birth (*brahma-janmabhiḥ*), the three-fold births by seminal parenthood, the sacred thread initiation and the sacrificial initiation which pertain to *brāhmaṇas*? There is nothing special about them, since just by attraction to the topics of the unlimited, one can attain the highest achievement. Or else, for one who is attracted to the topics of the unlimited what is the value of *brahminical* births, since lack of attraction to His topics renders all such births useless."

|| 10.47.59 ||

kvemāḥ striyo vana-carīr vyabhicāra-duṣṭāḥ

kṛṣṇe kva caiṣa paramātmani rūḍha-bhāvaḥ

nanv īśvaro 'nubhajato 'viduṣo 'pi sākṣāc

chreyas tanoty agada-rāja ivopayuktaḥ

TRANSLATION

How amazing it is that these simple women who wander about the forest, seemingly spoiled by improper behavior, have achieved the perfection of

unalloyed love for Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Soul! Still, it is true that the Supreme Lord Himself awards His blessings even to an ignorant worshiper, just as the best medicine works even when taken by a person ignorant of its ingredients.

COMMENTARY

Therefore the reason for someone being most exalted is devotion alone, and not such factors as performance of austerities and knowledge. Though this devotion is the most exalted, it is not deemed so by the common people. Remaining in such a place, pure devotion makes one its own shelter, making him most exalted, worshipable by all and most rarely approachable. In two verses (59-60), Uddhava speaks about this with astonishment, his hair standing on end.

Uddhava sang, "These *gopīs* are considered lowly on account of their being women, their birth as cowherds and their behavior. Since it is their nature to wander about the forests (*vana-carīr*), they are naturally contaminated by improper behavior. So where (*kva*) have these women attained *mahābhāva* (*rūḍha-bhāvaḥ*) for Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Soul, who is the source of all other souls, and superior (*paramo*) to all His other forms such as the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha?"

The use of the word *kva* (where) in the first two lines indicates the impossibility of its existence. In other words, where else have such persons as these apparently insignificant and impure *gopīs* attained the highest perfection of life, namely unalloyed pure love for Kṛṣṇa? It seems most astonishing that they could be so spiritually elevated. But on thinking a moment, Uddhava decided, "Ah, it is not so amazing!"

Uddhava continued thinking, "Certainly (*nanu*) the Supreme Lord (*īśvaraḥ:Bhagavān*) can give this most auspicious thing to such persons as this, who are without philosophical knowledge (*avidusaḥ*) of *ātmā* and Brahman, and not just to perfected persons. To devotees like the gopīs Kṛṣṇa gave liberation from *saṁsāra* and the pure ecstatic taste of His love, which is difficult to attain even for liberated souls. Nectar (*amṛta*), the king of medicines (*agada-rāja*), gives substantial benefits (*chreyas:śreyaḥ*) by bestowing a unique sweet taste along with dispelling a person's disease, even to one ignorant of its identity. Similarly, why then should Kṛṣṇa not give that most exalted *mahābhāva*, which even devotees like Nārada cannot attain, to these *gopīs* who are perfect in devotion (*bhakti-siddha*) and eternally liberated (*nitya-siddha*)? Besides that, these *gopīs* are in full knowledge of Kṛṣṇa's personal form and identity, qualities, opulences and sweetness. And they have engaged their intelligence in Kṛṣṇa's service, as well as all the limbs of their bodies, their youth, feminine charms and all their ornaments."

There are three types of adulterous women (*vyabhicāra-duṣṭāḥ*: corrupted by deviation). The first is a woman who enjoys both her husband and a lover, being faithful to neither.

Both ordinary society and the scriptures condemn this conduct. The second type of adulterous woman is she who abandons her husband to enjoy only with her lover. Society and the scriptures also condemn this behavior, although such a fallen woman may be said to at least have the good quality of dedicating herself to a single man. The last kind of adulterous woman is she who abandons her husband and enjoys in the attitude of being a lover of Kṛṣṇa. Although foolish, common people criticize this position, such behavior is glorified by those who are wise in spiritual science. Therefore learned members of society and the revealed scriptures praise such single-minded devotion to the Lord. Such was the *gopīs*' behavior. Thus the term *vyabhicāra-duṣṭāḥ*, "corrupted by deviation," indicates the apparent resemblance between the *gopīs*' behavior and that of ordinary adulterous women.

The characteristics of *rūḍha-bhāvaḥ* or *mahābhāva* are described in *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*.

|| 10.47.60 ||

nāyaṁ śriyo 'ṅga u nitānta-rateḥ prasādaḥ

svar-yoṣitāṁ nalina-gandha-rucāṁ kuto 'nyāḥ

rāsotsave 'sya bhuja-daṇḍa-gṛhīta-kaṇṭha-

labdhāśiṣāṁ ya udagād vraja-vallabhīnām

TRANSLATION

When Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa was dancing with the gopīs in the rāsa-līlā, the gopīs were embraced by the arms of the Lord. This transcendental favor was never bestowed upon the goddess of fortune or other consorts in the spiritual world. Indeed, never was such a thing even imagined by the most beautiful girls in the heavenly planets, whose bodily luster and aroma resemble the lotus flower. And what to speak of worldly women who are very beautiful according to material estimation?

COMMENTARY

Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the best of all *avatāras*, exists on the highest platform of purity and morality, and thus He always remained praiseworthy by all, even while accepting worldly criticism for His cow-tending, wandering in the forest, taking meals with young monkeys, stealing yogurt and seducing other men's wives. Similarly, the *gopīs*, who are the essence of Kṛṣṇa's pleasure potency (*hlādinī-śakti*), achieved the highest standard of purity and auspiciousness, even in comparison to the goddesses of fortune, and thus the *gopīs* are supremely glorious, even though they were criticized by worldly people because they were mere cowherd women living in the forest and behaving in an apparently improper way.

Uddhava said, “Oh, even Lakṣmī, who resides upon the chest of Lord Nārāyaṇa, and who has enjoyed unlimitedly with Him, never got such mercy. What then to speak of the women of heaven (*svar-yoṣitāṁ*), the wives of Lord Upendra (Vāmanadeva) and other incarnations, who possess extraordinary beauty, good qualities, and fine fragrance like that of a lotus.”

In this verse the supreme position of the *gopīs* is established in that they achieved the rare mercy of being embraced around their necks by the arms of Kṛṣṇa during the *rāsa* dance. This statement also implies that among all auspicious events, the *rāsa* dance is the most excellent.

|| 10.47.61 ||

āsām aho caraṇa-reṇu-juṣām ahaṁ syāṁ

vṛndāvane kim api gulma-latauṣadhīnām

yā dustyajaṁ sva-janam ārya-pathaṁ ca hitvā

bhejur mukunda-padavīṁ śrutibhir vimṛgyām

TRANSLATION

The gopīs of Vṛndāvana have given up the association of their husbands, sons and other family members, who are very difficult to give up, and they have forsaken the path of chastity to take shelter of the lotus feet of Mukunda, Kṛṣṇa, which one should search for by Vedic knowledge. Oh, let me be fortunate enough to be one of the bushes, creepers or herbs in Vṛndāvana, because the gopīs trample them and bless them with the dust of their lotus feet.

COMMENTARY

Uddhava said, “As it has been proved that the *gopīs*’ love is the most rare to attain, it would be improper to desire it. Therefore it was with lack of judgment that I have said ‘that *mahābhāva* which those desiring liberation, the liberated and devotees like me hanker after’ (v. 58). But now with proper consideration, let me correctly express my desire. I want to be born as some low shrub, creeper or grass upon which the gopīs will place their feet (*āsām aho caraṇa-reṇu*).”

One may question: “But what is that supreme excellence of the *gopīs*’ worship, that you desire their foot dust, rather than that of such exalted personalities as Lakṣmī?”

Uddhava replies, “I have never seen such intense worship where one can break all the mundane principles of religiosity, shyness and sense control. Every night, the Vraja-gopīs give up all shame, their respectable upbringing and religious codes, which are as hard as thunderbolts to break, and run off to meet Kṛṣṇa. At the time of returning home, they are completely oblivious as to whether they are following the right footpath or not. Then they will place their blessed feet upon my head, which will be present there in the form of some blade of grass. As for now, even though I pitifully beg for it millions of times over, they are not willing to put their feet on my head. Therefore my life will be successful only if I am born as a blade of grass in Vṛndāvana!”

|| 10.47.62 ||

yā vai śriyārcitam ajādibhir āpta-kāmair

yogeśvarair api yad ātmani rāsa-goṣṭhyām

kṛṣṇasya tad bhagavataḥ caraṇāravindaṁ

nyastaṁ staneṣu vijahuḥ parirabhya tāpam

TRANSLATION

The goddess of fortune herself, along with Lord Brahmā and all the other demigods, who are masters of yogic perfection, can worship the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa only within her mind. But during the rāsa dance Lord Kṛṣṇa placed His feet upon these gopīs’ breasts, and by embracing those feet the gopīs gave up all distress.

COMMENTARY

In this verse Uddhava again glorifies the mahābhāva of the gopīs which is inaccessible to Lakṣmī and others.

Uddhava said, “Indeed (*vai*), the *gopīs* relieved their mental anguish at the *rāsa* arena (*rāsa-goṣṭhyām*) by embracing the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa to their breasts. These are the same lotus feet that Brahmā, Lakṣmī and others worship in their minds (*ātmani*), but can never touch directly.”

This point is explained in such verses as: *yad-vāñchayā śrīr lalanācarat tapo vihāya kāmān su-ciraṁ dhṛta-vratā*, “Desiring to touch Your lotus feet, the goddess of fortune

performed austerities for centuries, giving up all other desires and taking austere vows." (SB 10.16.36)

|| 10.47.63 ||

vande nanda-vraja-strīṇāṁ pāda-reṇum abhīkṣṇaśaḥ

yāsāṁ hari-kathodgītaṁ punāti bhuvana-trayam

TRANSLATION

I repeatedly offer my respects to the dust from the feet of the women of Nanda Mahārāja's cowherd village. When these gopīs loudly chant the glories of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the vibration purifies the three worlds.

COMMENTARY

After glorifying the *gopīs*, Uddhava offers his respects in this verse: Uddhava said, "I offer my respects to the foot dust of the cowherd women of Vraja continuously, as long as I do not get birth as a blade of grass, which will make it easy to get their foot dust. Their loud songs about the form, qualities and pastimes of Kṛṣṇa purify the three worlds, removing the contamination of ignorance." In the phrase *pāda-reṇum abhīkṣṇaśaḥ*, the affix *śa* indicates "perpetually," not just three or five times a day.

In relation to this section, Vyāsa and other great commentators have concluded as follows: Among all the devotees, those who worship Kṛṣṇa are the best, since Kṛṣṇa is the original Supreme Personality of Godhead (*svayam bhagavān*). Among those devotees, those who are Kṛṣṇa's immediate associates in His pastimes are more intimate, because of their loyalty in following Him. Among these intimate associates, Uddhava is the best, for it is said about Uddhava: *tvam tu bhāgavateṣv aham*, "Among the devotees I am Uddhava" (SB 11.16.29). And also *noddhavo 'ṇv api man-nyūno*, "Uddhava is not less than Myself." (SB 3.4.31)

Despite his extremely elevated position, however, Uddhava himself desired the *bhāva* of the Vraja-gopīs and had the greatest regard for them. According to Śrī *Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī*, Śrī Uddhava did not offer such respect even to Kṛṣṇa's queens in Dvārakā. Among the *gopīs*, Śrī Rādhā is the highest and following Her is the highest achievement.

|| 10.47.64 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

atha gopīr anujñāpya yaśodāṁ nandam eva ca

gopān āmantrya dāśārho yāsyann āruruhe ratham

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Uddhava, the descendant of Daśārha, then took permission to leave from the gopīs and from mother Yaśodā and Nanda Mahārāja. He bade farewell to all the cowherd men and, about to depart, mounted his chariot.

COMMENTARY

Begging their permission (*anujñāpya*), Uddhava bid farewell (*āmantrya*) and departed.

|| 10.47.65 ||

taṁ nirgataṁ samāsādya nānopāyana-pāṇayaḥ

nandādayo 'nurāgeṇa prāvocann aśru-locanāḥ

TRANSLATION

As Uddhava was about to leave, Nanda and the others approached him bearing various items of worship. With tears in their eyes they addressed him as follows.

COMMENTARY

Nanda Mahārāja and other Vrajavāsīs held various gifts (*nānā-upāyana*) in their hands. During Kṛṣṇa's *paugaṇḍa* and *kaiśora* ages (childhood and youth), they had collected many jewels, gold coins and pearl ornaments, and during Kṛṣṇa's youth, many clothes. Now, in their feelings of separation, they lost interest in keeping these things, so they offered them as gifts to Uddhava.

|| 10.47.66 ||

manaso vṛttayo naḥ syuḥ kṛṣṇa pādāmbujāśrayāḥ

vāco 'bhidhāyinīr nāmnāṁ kāyas tat-prahvaṇādiṣu

TRANSLATION

[Nanda and the other cowherds said:] May our mental functions always take shelter of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, may our words always chant His names, and may our bodies always bow down to Him and serve Him.

|| 10.47.67 ||

karmabhir bhrāmyamāṇānāṁ yatra kvāpīśvarecchayā

maṅgalācaritair dānai ratir naḥ kṛṣṇa īśvare

TRANSLATION

Wherever we are made to wander about this world by the Supreme Lord's will, in accordance with the reactions to our fruitive work, may our good works and charity always grant Us love for Lord Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

Nanda Mahārāja said, "Our dear long-lived Uddhava, we, Kṛṣṇa's mother and father, have been most hardhearted toward our son, even though He is a great ocean of beauty, good qualities and character, and we remain so even now. We understand that the abundant affection and care we previously showed Kṛṣṇa now appear to have been artificial, since even in His absence we remain alive."

"King Daśaratha was actually the only real father in this world because he immediately died upon hearing that his son Rāma had gone away. We, on the other hand, do not have even a trace of love for our son Kṛṣṇa. Therefore this omniscient son of ours has rejected us as unqualified parents. Being the Supreme Personality of Godhead, He has used His inconceivable ingenuity to make Devakī and Vasudeva His parents instead. Therefore, Yaśodā and I should be completely condemned as the most unfortunate persons in the three worlds. Nevertheless, perhaps in some future lifetime we may become aware of Kṛṣṇa as He is and become attracted to Him."

In this way, Nanda Mahārāja prays in two verses. (Texts 66-67)

Nanda Mahārāja's statement, "May our minds take shelter of Kṛṣṇa's feet," is a reversal due to great love. Actually the mind and senses of Nanda and Yaśodā were always absorbed in Kṛṣṇa, but they prayed in this way. This indicates the extreme predominance of the *sañcārī-bhāva* of *dainya* or humility within them. Moreover, it is the nature of those who possess *kṛṣṇa-prema* in the friendly (*sakhya-rasa*), parental

(*vātsalya-rasa*) or conjugal moods (*mādhurya-rasa*) to become indifferent to themselves as repositories (*āśraya-ālambana*) of love for love's object (*viṣaya-ālambana*), Kṛṣṇa, due the extreme hopelessness they feel in separation from Kṛṣṇa. Hence in their excessive humility they forget their own proper moods and instead take up the mood of servitude (*dāsya-bhāva*).

An example of *sakhya* turning into *dāysa* is as follows: When Balarāma, near the end of the *brahma-vimohana-līlā*, thought that "This Kṛṣṇa. being aloof, is not even now confiding in Us," He developed *dāsya-bhāva* and said, *prāyo māyāstu me bhartur*: "This must be the *māyā* of My Lord." (SB 10.13.37)

An example of *dāsya-bhāva* in *mādhurya-rasa* is as follows: Rādhā said, *hā nātha ramaṇa preṣtha...dāsyās te kṛpaṇāyā me*: "O master, O enjoyer! Being this wretched maidservant to You."(SB 10.30.40) And a *gopī* said, "*kvacid api sa kathā naḥ kinkarīnām*; "Does Kṛṣṇa ever talk about us, His maidservants?" (SB 10.47.21)

The present verse gives an example of *dāsya-bhāva* in *vātsalya-rasa*. The cowherds headed by Nanda Mahārāja said, *manaso vṛttayo naḥ syuḥ, kṛṣṇa pādāmbujāsrayāḥ*: "May our mental functions always take shelter of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet." However, although they spoke like this, even in a state of ecstasy Nanda Mahārāja and Yaśodā would never give up their parental relationship with Kṛṣṇa and speak like Vasudeva and Devakī who, due to being overcome with an awareness of Kṛṣṇa's opulences (*aiśvarya-jñāna*), said, *yuvāṁ na naḥ sutau*, "You are not actually our sons." (SB 10.85.18)

|| 10.47.68 ||

evaṁ sabhājito gopaiḥ kṛṣṇa-bhaktyā narādhipa

uddhavaḥ punar āgacchan mathurāṁ kṛṣṇa-pālitām

TRANSLATION

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] O ruler of men, thus honored by the cowherd men with expressions of devotion for Lord Kṛṣṇa, Uddhava went back to the city of Mathurā, which was under Kṛṣṇa's protection.

COMMENTARY

The word Kṛṣṇa-pālitām indicates that even though Uddhava was very attracted to Vraja, due to being fully devoted to Kṛṣṇa, he returned to Mathurā which was being

protected by Kṛṣṇa. Śukadeva Gosvāmī intends to criticize Kṛṣṇa here, for if Kṛṣṇa is protecting Mathurā (*mathurāṁ kṛṣṇa-pālitām*), why does He not also protect Vraja by coming there?

|| 10.47.69 ||

kṛṣṇāya praṇipatyāha bhakty-udrekaṁ vrajaukasām

vasudevāya rāmāya rājñe copāyanāny adāt

TRANSLATION

After falling down to pay his homage, Uddhava described to Lord Kṛṣṇa the immense devotion of the residents of Vraja. Uddhava also described it to Vasudeva, Lord Balarāma and King Ugrasena and presented to them the gifts of tribute he had brought with him.

COMMENTARY

Uddhava described how the inhabitants of Vraja had unlimitedly more devotion than the residents of Mathurā (*bhakty-udrekaṁ vrajaukasām*).

Uddhava said, “My dear master, Kṛṣṇa. All the scriptures conclude that You are controlled by pure devotion, attained by devotion and seen only by devotion. Now I have directly seen that among all Your devotees, the Vrajavāsīs have the most intense devotion.” After all, Your father Nanda has said:

> *śvetī-kṛtākhila-janaṁ, viraheṇa tavādhunā gokulaṁ*
>
> *kṛṣṇa devarśeḥ, svetadvīpa bhramaṁ dadhe*

> ‘O Kṛṣṇa, everyone in Gokula has turned white in separation from You. This has even fooled the sage among the demigods, Nārada, to mistake Gokula for Śvetadvīpa.” (*Bhakti-rasāṁrta sindhu*, southern division, third wave, verse 48)

Uddhava continued, “Kṛṣṇa, Your father Nanda Mahārāja was so much bewildered in Your absence that he prayed that his mind would concentrate on You, *manaso vṛttayo naḥ syuḥ* (verse 66). From this You can understand his overwhelming attraction to You. And Your mother Yaśodā was so choked up that she could not say anything.”

Hearing this, Kṛṣṇa lost control of His mind and senses, and cried loudly in the midst of the public assembly. That night in a secluded place, Uddhava revealed to Kṛṣṇa the blazing subterranean fire of the gopīs love for Him. After Uddhava related to Kṛṣṇa just one day of the divine madness (*divyonmāda*) of Śrī Rādhā, the crown jewel of His dear *gopīs*, and Her wonderful prattling (*citra-jalpa*), Kṛṣṇa stayed up the whole night burning with fever in separation from Rādhikā.

Thus ends the commentary on the Forty Seventh Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Forty-eight

Kṛṣṇa Pleases His Devotees

|| 10.48.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

atha vijñāya bhagavān sarvātmā sarva-darśanaḥ

sairandhryāḥ kāma-taptāyāḥ priyam icchan gṛhaṁ yayau

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Next, after assimilating Uddhava's report, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the omniscient Soul of all that be, desired to satisfy the serving girl Trivakrā, who was troubled by lust. Thus He went to her house.

COMMENTARY

In this chapter Kṛṣṇa gratifies Kubjā, visits Akrūra and sends him to Hastināpura after hearing his praises.

Understanding in detail (*vijñāya:viśeṣo jñātva*) what was spoken by Uddhava, Kṛṣṇa had actually already reconciled everything in that regard. The word *bhagavān* (Supreme Lord) indicates that Kṛṣṇa, by His inconceivable powers and opulences, had already gone to Vraja in a separate manifestation even while continuing to live in Mathurā. It is implied that Kṛṣṇa did this to satisfy everyone's desires, since He is the Supreme Soul of

all (*sarvātmā*). To reconcile the situation for Uddhava, Kṛṣṇa appeared as omniscient (*sarva-darśana*), explaining to Him the confidential mystery of His dual manifestations while appearing to Uddhava in His manifestation of separation. Then, in order to keep the promise He had previously made, Kṛṣṇa went with Uddhava to the house of Kubjā, as stated in the words beginning *sairandhryāḥ* (serving girl).

|| 10.48.2 ||

mahārhopaskarair āḍhyaṁ kāmopāyopabṛṁhitam

muktā-dāma-patākābhir vitāna-śayanāsanaiḥ

dhūpaiḥ surabhibhir dīpaiḥ srag-gandhair api maṇḍitam

TRANSLATION

Trivakrā's home was opulently appointed with expensive furnishings and replete with sensual accoutrements meant to inspire sexual desire. There were banners, rows of strung pearls, canopies, fine beds and sitting places, and also fragrant incense, oil lamps, flower garlands and aromatic sandalwood paste.

COMMENTARY

Kubjā's house was filled with abundant paraphernalia appropriate for sexual enjoyment including explicit sexual pictures and herbal aphrodisiacs to excite lust (*kāma-upāya*).

|| 10.48.3 ||

gṛhaṁ tam āyāntam avekṣya sāsanāt sadyaḥ samutthāya hi jāta-sambhramā

yathopasaṅgamya sakhībhir acyutaṁ sabhājayām āsa sad-āsanādibhiḥ

TRANSLATION

When Trivakrā saw Him arriving at her house, she at once rose from her seat in a flurry. Coming forward graciously with her girlfriends, she respectfully greeted Lord Acyuta by offering Him an excellent seat and other articles of worship.

COMMENTARY

Kubjā offered Kṛṣṇa a suitable (*yatha*) seat and other objects of worship.

|| 10.48.4 ||

tathoddhavaḥ sādhutayābhipūjito nyaṣīdad urvyām abhimṛśya cāsanam

kṛṣṇo ’pi tūrṇaṁ śayanaṁ mahā-dhanaṁ viveśa lokācaritāny anuvrataḥ

TRANSLATION

Uddhava also received a seat of honor, since he was a saintly person, but he simply touched it and sat on the floor. Then Lord Kṛṣṇa, imitating the manners of human society, quickly made Himself comfortable on an opulent bed.

COMMENTARY

The phrase *nyaṣīdad urvyām*, “He sat on the ground” implies that Uddhava felt that it was improper for him as Kṛṣṇa’s servant to sit on a seat offered by the hand of His beloved. Therefore, Uddhava touched the *āsana* with his hand to honor Kubjā’s offer, and then sat on the floor. The word *śayanaṁ* (bed) means that Kṛṣṇa made Himself comfortable on a bed located in the inner chambers of Trivakrā’s home.

|| 10.48.5 ||

sā majjanālepa-dukūla-bhūṣaṇa srag-gandha-tāmbūla-sudhāsavādibhiḥ

prasādhitātmopasasāra mādhavaṁ sa-vrīḍa-līlotsmita-vibhramekṣitaiḥ

TRANSLATION

Trivakrā prepared herself by bathing, anointing her body, and dressing in fine garments, by putting on jewelry, garlands and perfume, and also by chewing betel nut, drinking fragrant liquor, and so on. She then approached Lord Mādhava with shy, playful smiles and coquettish glances.

COMMENTARY

Kubjā prepared her body (*ātmā*) for enjoyment by applying aguru perfume (*gandha*) and other items.

|| 10.48.6 ||

āhūya kāntāṁ nava-saṅgama-hriyā viśaṅkitāṁ kaṅkaṇa-bhūṣite kare

pragṛhya śayyām adhiveśya rāmayā reme 'nulepārpaṇa-puṇya-leśayā

TRANSLATION

Calling forward His beloved, who was anxious and shy at the prospect of this new contact, the Lord pulled her by her bangled hands onto the bed. Thus He enjoyed with that beautiful girl, whose only trace of piety was her having offered ointment to the Lord.

COMMENTARY

The two words *nava-saṅgama-hriyā* (shy with a new contact) and *visaṅkitām* (fearful) indicates that Trivakrā was in fact a virgin girl at this point. Though Kubjā was beautiful, she was protected because of her hunchback. Kubjā had accumulated a trace of piety because she had offered unguents to Kṛṣṇa. But she did not have heaps of pious credits like the *sādhana-siddha gopīs* in Vraja and the women of Mathurā.

|| 10.48.7 ||

sānaṅga-tapta-kucayor urasas tathākṣṇor

jighranty ananta-caraṇena rujo mṛjantī

dorbhyāṁ stanāntara-gataṁ parirabhya kāntam
ānanda-mūrtim ajahād ati-dīrgha-tāpam

TRANSLATION

Simply by smelling the fragrance of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, Trivakrā cleansed away the burning lust Cupid had aroused in her breasts, chest and eyes. With her two arms she embraced between her breasts her lover, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the personification of bliss, and thus she gave up her long-standing distress.

COMMENTARY

Kubjā removed the burning pain of her breasts, chest and eyes by touching and smelling Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet.

|| 10.48.8 ||

saivaṁ kaivalya-nāthaṁ taṁ prāpya duṣprāpyam īśvaram

aṅga-rāgārpaṇenāho durbhagedam ayācata

TRANSLATION

Having thus gotten the hard-to-get Supreme Lord by the simple act of offering Him body ointment, unfortunate Trivakrā submitted to that Lord of freedom the following request.

COMMENTARY

Śrimatī Trivakrā prayed to Kṛṣṇa, her exclusive Lord (*kaivalya-nāthaṁ*), “Please enjoy only with me and not with any other woman.” Because Kṛṣṇa was not prepared to grant such a benediction, Trivakrā is described here as unfortunate (*durbhagā*).

|| 10.48.9 ||

sahoṣyatām iha preṣṭha dināni katicin mayā

ramasva notsahe tyaktuṁ saṅgaṁ te ’mburuhekṣaṇa

TRANSLATION

[Trivakrā said:] O beloved, please stay here with me for a few days more and enjoy. I cannot bear to give up Your association, O lotus-eyed one!

COMMENTARY

Trivakrā said, “Please stay for some days in my inner chambers and do not go out. All arrangements have been made in this house for drinking and eating.” There are two readings *saha-uṣyatām* (stay with me) and *aho uṣyatām* (O please stay).

|| 10.48.10 ||

tasyai kāma-varaṁ dattvā mānayitvā ca māna-daḥ

sahoddhavena sarveśaḥ sva-dhāmāgamad ṛddhimat

TRANSLATION

Promising her the fulfillment of this lusty desire, considerate Kṛṣṇa, Lord of all beings, paid Trivakrā His respects and then returned with Uddhava to His own supremely opulent residence.

COMMENTARY

The words *kāma-varaṁ dattvā* indicate that Kṛṣṇa promised Trivakrā He would fulfill her lusty desires even though she was a common woman.

"Honoring her" (*māna-daḥ*) means that before leaving, Kṛṣṇa took the opportunity to show her respect and told Kubjā, "Continuing to indulge in enjoying unrestrictedly will not be desirable for us, because it will simply create evil gossip." Kṛṣṇa came and left with Uddhava (*sahoddhavena*) in order to prevent such gossip, since Uddhava was famous everywhere as the crest jewel of proper behavior. From previous explanations, it should understood that Kubjā is an expansion of Kṛṣṇa's *bhū-śakti*.

|| 10.48.11 ||

durārdhyaṁ samārādhya viṣṇuṁ sarveśvareśvaram

yo vṛṇīte mano-grāhyam asattvāt kumanīṣy asau

TRANSLATION

Lord Viṣṇu, the Supreme Lord of all lords, is ordinarily difficult to approach. One who has properly worshiped Him and then chooses the benediction of mundane sense gratification is certainly of poor intelligence, for he is satisfied with an insignificant result.

COMMENTARY

In relation to this incident, Śukadeva Gosvāmī instructs those persons who are worshiping Kṛṣṇa in the mood of being a lover. The person who worships Kṛṣṇa for material happiness is a fool. However, if one worships Kṛṣṇa with the intent to fully please Kṛṣṇa's senses, and by so doing if one also gets happiness in the process, there is no fault. In such a situation, it should be understood that one has cut off all material attachment by desiring only pure devotional service.

|| 10.48.12 ||

akrūra-bhavanaṁ kṛṣṇaḥ saha-rāmoddhavaḥ prabhuḥ

kiñcic cikīrṣayan prāgād akrūra-prīya-kāmyayā

TRANSLATION

Then Lord Kṛṣṇa, wanting to have some things done, went to Akrūra's house with Balarāma and Uddhava. The Lord also desired to please Akrūra.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa went to Akrūra's house with a desire to please Akrūra and engage him in service (*kiñcic cikīrṣayan*), since the order of the master is pleasing to the servant.

|| 10.48.13-14 ||

sa tān nara-vara-śreṣṭhān ārād vīkṣya sva-bāndhavān

pratyutthāya pramuditaḥ pariṣvajyābhinandya ca

nanāma kṛṣṇaṁ rāmaṁ ca sa tair apy abhivāditaḥ

pūjayām āsa vidhi-vat kṛtāsana-parigrahān

TRANSLATION

Akrūra stood up in great joy when he saw them, his own relatives and the greatest of exalted personalities, coming from a distance. After embracing them and greeting them, Akrūra bowed down to Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma and was greeted by Them in return. Then, when his guests had taken their seats, he worshiped them in accordance with scriptural rules.

|| 10.48.15-16 ||

pādāvanejanīr āpo dhārayan śirasā nṛpa

arhaṇenāmbarair divyair gandha-srag-bhūṣaṇottamaiḥ

arcitvā śirasānamya pādāv aṅka-gatau mṛjan

praśrayāvanato 'krūraḥ kṛṣṇa-rāmāv abhāṣata

TRANSLATION

O King, Akrūra bathed the feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Balarāma and then poured the bath water on his head. He presented Them with gifts of fine clothing, aromatic sandalwood paste, flower garlands and excellent jewelry. After thus worshiping the two Lords, he bowed his head to the floor. He then

began to massage Lord Kṛṣṇa's feet, placing them on his lap, and with his head bowed in humility he addressed Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma as follows.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra put all the water (*ā:sarva:āpaḥ*) that he used to wash Their feet on his head. Then with both hands he gently massaged (*mṛjan*) Their feet.

|| 10.48.17 ||

diṣṭyā pāpo hataḥ kaṁsaḥ sānugo vām idaṁ kulam

bhavadbhyām uddhṛtaṁ kṛcchrād durantāc ca samedhitam

TRANSLATION

[Akrūra said:] It is our good fortune that You two Lords have killed the evil Kaṁsa and his followers, thus delivering Your dynasty from endless suffering and causing it to flourish.

|| 10.48.18 ||

yuvāṁ pradhāna-puruṣau jagad-dhetū jagan-mayau

bhavadbhyāṁ na vinā kiñcit param asti na cāparam

TRANSLATION

You both are the original Supreme Person, the cause of the universe and its very substance. Not the slightest subtle cause or manifest product of creation exists apart from You.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra said, "Why say, 'this dynasty of Yours' (*vām idaṁ kulam*, v.17), when You are the cause of the whole universe (*jagad-hetū*)?" Because the one Lord is appearing in two forms, He is addressed in the dual form (*yuvāṁ*).

Akrūra said, "Thus, You alone are the *pradhāna* and You alone are the *puruṣa*. You alone are the cause (*jagad-dhetū*) and the effect (*jagan-mayau*)." By negation Akrūra expresses the same idea. "Without You, there is no cause and no effect."

|| 10.48.19 ||

ātma-sṛṣṭam idaṁ viśvam anvāviśya sva-śaktibhiḥ

īyate bahudhā brahman śru ta-pratyakṣa-gocaram

TRANSLATION

O Supreme Absolute Truth, with Your personal energies You create this universe and then enter into it. Thus one can perceive You in many different forms by hearing from authorities and by direct experience.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra said, "The one Supreme Lord, through the form of the universe, becomes many." That is expressed in this verse. "Having produced (*ātma-sṛṣṭam:sva-kāryam*) this universe, You enter it and reside there (*anvāviśya:praviśya sthitaḥ*). You are perceived through various forms such as the demigods, Gandharvas, humans and cows by direct perception and by hearing from scripture.

|| 10.48.20 ||

yathā hi bhūteṣu carācareṣu mahy-ādayo yoniṣu bhānti nānā

evaṁ bhavān kevala ātma-yoniṣv ātmātma-tantro bahudhā vibhāti

TRANSLATION

Just as the primary elements—earth and so on—manifest themselves in abundant variety among all the species of mobile and immobile life, so You, the one independent Supreme Soul, appear to be manifold among the variegated objects of Your creation.

COMMENTARY

This verse uses an analogy to explain how manifold varieties expand from one Lord. Akrūra said, "Just as material bodies are manifest with various forms from the causal material elements like earth and water, so You, the one independent (*ātma-tantraḥ*) Lord, become many as the multitude of visible objects in this universe."

|| 10.48.21 ||

sṛjasy atho lumpasi pāsi viśvaṁ rajas-tamaḥ-sattva-guṇaiḥ sva-śaktibhiḥ

na badhyase tad-guṇa-karmabhir vā jñānātmanas te kva ca bandha-hetuḥ

TRANSLATION

You create, destroy and also maintain this universe with Your personal energies—the modes of passion, ignorance and goodness—yet You are never entangled by these modes or the activities they generate. Since You are the original source of all knowledge, what could ever cause You to be bound by illusion?

COMMENTARY

Akrūra said, "Therefore You are the one Supreme Lord of the universe. You are not bound up like the living entities by *karma* and the three modes of nature."

Kṛṣṇa replies, "How is that I am not bound up?"

Akrūra answered, "As You are the embodiment of knowledge (*jñāna-ātmanaḥ*), what is the question of being bound up by ignorance (*te kva ca bandha-hetuḥ*)? Ignorance exists for the living entities but not for You."

|| 10.48.22 ||

dehādy-upādher anirūpitatvād bhavo na sākṣān na bhidātmanaḥ syāt

ato na bandhas tava naiva mokṣaḥ syātām nikāmas tvayi no 'vivekaḥ

TRANSLATION

Since it has never been demonstrated that You are covered by material, bodily designations, it must be concluded that for You there is neither birth in a literal sense nor any duality. Therefore You never undergo bondage or liberation, and if You appear to, it is only because of Your desire that we see You in that way, or simply because of our lack of discrimination.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, "If there is no ignorance in Me, then where does this body of Mine, a product of ignorance, come from?"

Akrūra said, “Your body is not designated as coming from ignorance by those who know the scriptures. Therefore You have no birth (*bhavo na*) or material existence like the living entities. If Your body appears to be material, it is only an appearance of birth like the living entities, since You are actually independent. As You do not have a material body born of ignorance, You do not take birth from a father’s semen like an ordinary living entity. Rather, Your birth is just Your divine appearance (*āvirbhāva*). For You there is no difference between body and soul.”

“Your body is You, as is proved by the statement: *deha-dehi-vibhāgo ’yaṁ neśvare vidyate kvacit*, “There is no distinction between the body and the soul of the Supreme Personality of Godhead at any time.” (*Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta* 1.5.342 from *Kūrma Purāṇa*) Since You are *Brahman*, transcendental to knowledge and ignorance, there is no bondage or liberation for You.”

Kṛṣṇa: “But My bondage and liberation do occur, as when I am bound to a mortar by My mother or I am delivered from Kāliya’s lake,”

Akrūra: “These do indeed occur (*syātām*), but only because You do not prohibit them from occurring. Why do You accept bondage and liberation? You do so out of Your free will (*nikāmaḥ*) because of their appropriateness for meditation by us, Your devotees. Since You enact this bondage and liberation in full knowledge (*vivekaḥ*), they are not at all caused by illusion. For Him who is knowledge itself, there is no bondage to or liberation from this world, which is produced by ignorance.”

|| 10.48.23 ||

tvayodito ’yaṁ jagato hitāya yadā yadā veda-pathaḥ purāṇaḥ

bādhyeta pāṣaṇḍa-pathair asadbhis tadā bhavān sattva-guṇaṁ bibharti

TRANSLATION

You originally enunciated the ancient religious path of the Vedas for the benefit of the whole universe. Whenever that path becomes obstructed by wicked persons following the path of atheism, You assume one of Your incarnations, which are all in the transcendental mode of goodness.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra said, “Though Your personality and pastimes transcend the material modes, whenever the ancient (*purāṇaḥ*) path of *dharma* (*veda-pataḥ*) enunciated by You (*tvaya-udita*) is disturbed by the demons, You appear in the universe to increase *sattva-guṇa* in order to maintain the righteous by protecting the path of religion.”

|| 10.48.24 ||

sa tvam prabho ’dya Vasudeva-gṛhe ’vatīrṇaḥ
svāṁśena bhāram apanetum ihāsi bhūmeḥ

akṣauhiṇī-śata-vadhena suretarāṁśa-

rājñām amuṣya ca kulasya yaśo vitanvan

TRANSLATION

You are that very same Supreme Person, my Lord, and You have now appeared in the home of Vasudeva with Your plenary portion. You have done this to relieve the earth’s burden by killing hundreds of armies led by kings who are expansions of the demigods’ enemies, and also to spread the fame of our dynasty.

COMMENTARY

“You have appeared along with Your expansion Balarāma (*svāṁśena*) in the house of Vasudeva to relieve the burden of the earth by killing the hundreds of demoniac kings, who are expansions of the enemies of the demigods (*suretarāṁsa-rājñām*).”

|| 10.48.25 ||

adyeśa no vasatayaḥ khalu bhūri-bhāgā
yaḥ sarva-deva-pitṛ-bhūta-nṛ-deva-mūrtiḥ

yat-pāda-śauca-salilaṁ tri-jagat punāti

sa tvaṁ jagad-gurur adhokṣaja yāḥ praviṣṭaḥ

TRANSLATION

Today, O Lord, my home has become most fortunate because You have entered it. As the Supreme Truth, You embody the forefathers, ordinary creatures, human beings and demigods, and the water that has washed Your feet purifies the three worlds. Indeed, O transcendent one, You are the spiritual master of the universe.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra said, “Now that You, the Supreme Lord and embodiment of all the demigods, have entered our home it has become blessed.”

|| 10.48.26 ||

kaḥ paṇḍitas tvad aparaṁ śaraṇaṁ samīyād
bhakta-priyād ṛta-giraḥ suhṛdaḥ kṛta-jñāt

sarvān dadāti suhṛdo bhajato ’bhikāmān

ātmānam apy upacayāpacayau na yasya

TRANSLATION

What learned person would approach anyone but You for shelter, when You are the affectionate, grateful and truthful well-wisher of Your devotees? To those who worship You in sincere friendship You reward everything they desire, even Your own self, yet You never increase or diminish.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra said, “What learned person would surrender to anyone other than You, who are true to Your word (*ṛta giraḥ*), having kept Your promise to come to my house after killing Kaṁsa. You are the well-wisher (*suhṛdaḥ*) of Your devotees and act accordingly. You are *kṛta-jña*, very grateful for whatever little worship a devotee offers, and even if the devotee forgets, You do not. As the friend of he whose mind is spotless and free from material desires, and he who worships You in friendship, You give whatever he desires. Even if they do not desire something, You also give that. Though You give so much, You are not finished. For You give even Yourself.”

Kṛṣṇa may object, “But if I give even Myself, will I not be left with nothing?”

Akrūra answers, “No, for You there is never increase or decrease (*upacayāpacayau na*). Even though all the objects in millions of universes are brought to You as offerings by millions of Brahmās and other demigods, still You do not increase. And though You give everything to Your devotees, including even Yourself, You do not decrease. This is because You possess inconceivable, unlimited energy.”

|| 10.48.27 ||

diṣṭyā janārdana bhavān iha naḥ pratīto

yogeśvarair api durāpa-gatiḥ sureśaiḥ

chindhy āśu naḥ suta-kalatra-dhanāpta-geha-

dehādi-moha-raśanāṁ bhavadīya-māyām

TRANSLATION

It is by our great fortune, Janārdana, that You are now visible to us, for even the masters of yoga and the foremost demigods can achieve this goal only with great difficulty. Please quickly cut the ropes of our illusory attachment for children, wife, wealth, influential friends, home and body. All such attachment is simply the effect of Your illusory material energy.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra said. “By our good fortune we can directly perceive (*pratīto: pratyakśī*) You.”

|| 10.48.28 ||

ity arcitaḥ saṁstutaś ca bhaktena bhagavān hariḥ

akrūraṁ sa-smitaṁ prāha gīrbhiḥ sammohayann iva

TRANSLATION

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Thus worshiped and fully glorified by His devotee, the Supreme Lord Hari smilingly addressed Akrūra, completely charming him with His words.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa somewhat (*iva*) bewildered (*sammohayann*) Akrūra by increasing his awareness of His opulences.

|| 10.48.29 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

tvaṁ no guruḥ pitṛvyaś ca ślāghyo bandhuś ca nityadā

vayaṁ tu rakṣyāḥ poṣyāś ca anukampyāḥ prajā hi vaḥ

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord said: You are Our spiritual master, paternal uncle and praiseworthy friend, and We are like your sons, always dependent on your protection, sustenance and compassion.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “We are like your sons (*prajāḥ*)”

|| 10.48.30 ||

bhavad-vidhā mahā-bhāgā niṣevyā arha-sattamāḥ

śreyas-kāmair nṛbhir nityaṁ devāḥ svārthā na sādhavaḥ

TRANSLATION

Exalted souls like you are the true objects of service and the most worshipable authorities for those who desire the highest good in life. Demigods are generally concerned with their own interests, but saintly devotees never are.

COMMENTARY

“Kṛṣṇa said, “O Akrūra, even from the ordinary point of view (v. 29) you deserve Our honor. But from the transcendental perspective You are most worshipable because You are a first-class Vaiṣṇava.” This is stated in this verse.

Kṛṣṇa said, “Among those worthy of worship, you are most worshipable (*arha-sattama*).”

Akrūra replied, “But isn’t it a well-established fact that men should worship the demigods?”

Kṛṣṇa: “The demigods are basically self-interested (*svārthā*), but the devotees are not. They are primarily interested in benefiting others.”

|| 10.48.31 ||

na hy am-mayāni tīrthāni na devā mṛc-chilā-mayāḥ

te punanty uru-kālena darśanād eva sādhavaḥ

TRANSLATION

No one can deny that there are holy places with sacred rivers, or that the demigods appear in deity forms made of earth and stone. But these purify the soul only after a long time, whereas saintly persons purify just by being seen.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra asked, “Are not the holy waters worthy of worship?”

Shaking His head Kṛṣṇa said, “No, though certainly the holy waters and the demigods purify, but that is very different from the purification through the devotees. The holy waters give purification by prolonged service, but the devotees give purification just by seeing them.”

|| 10.48.32 ||

sa bhavān suhṛdāṁ vai naḥ śreyān śreyaś-cikīrṣayā

jijñāsārthaṁ pāṇḍavānāṁ gacchasva tvaṁ gajāhvayam

TRANSLATION

You are indeed the best of Our friends, so please go to Hastināpura and, as the well-wisher of the Pāṇḍavas, find out how they are doing.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “Because you are Our well-wisher (*suhṛdaḥ*), being Our uncle, and because you act for others’ welfare (*śreyān*), being a devotee, you should do this. Go (*gacchasva*) to Hastināpura for your benefit (*śreyaḥ*).” It may also be taken as *gaccha sva*: “O relative (*sva*:uncle), please go for their benefit.”

|| 10.48.33 ||

pitary uparate bālāḥ saha mātrā su-duḥkhitāḥ

ānītāḥ sva-puraṁ rājñā vasanta iti śuśruma

TRANSLATION

We have heard that when their father passed away, the young Pāṇḍavas were brought with their anguished mother to the capital city by King Dhṛtarāṣṭra, and that they are now living there.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “I have heard that they are living with King Dhṛtarāṣṭra.”

|| 10.48.34 ||

teṣu rājāmbikā-putro bhrātṛ-putreṣu dīna-dhīḥ

samo na vartate nūnaṁ duṣputra-vaśa-go ’ndha-dṛk

TRANSLATION

Indeed, weak-minded Dhṛtarāṣṭra, the son of Ambikā, has come under the control of his wicked sons, and therefore that blind King is not treating his brother’s sons fairly.

|| 10.48.35 ||

gaccha jānīhi tad-vṛttam adhunā sādhv asādhu vā

vijñāya tad vidhāsyāmo yathā śaṁ suhṛdāṁ bhavet

TRANSLATION

Go and see whether Dhṛtarāṣṭra is acting properly or not. When We find out, We will make the necessary arrangements to help Our dear friends.

|| 10.48.36 ||

ity akrūraṁ samādiśya bhagavān harir īśvaraḥ

saṅkarṣaṇoddhavābhyāṁ vai tataḥ sva-bhavanaṁ yayau

TRANSLATION

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Thus fully instructing Akrūra, the Supreme Personality of Godhead Hari then returned to His residence, accompanied by Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa and Uddhava.

Thus ends the commentary on the Forty Eighth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Forty-nine

Akrūra’s Mission in Hastināpura

|| 10.49.1-2 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

sa gatvā hāstinapuraṁ pauravendra-yaśo-’ṅkitam

dadarśa tatrāmbikeyaṁ sa-bhīṣmaṁ viduraṁ pṛthām

saha-putraṁ ca bāhlīkaṁ bhāradvājaṁ sa-gautamam

karnaṁ suyodhanaṁ drauṇiṁ pāṇḍavān suhṛdo ’parān

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Akrūra went to Hastināpura, the city distinguished by the glory of the Paurava rulers. There he saw Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Bhīṣma, Vidura and Kunti, along with Bāhlika and his son Somadatta. He also saw Droṇācārya, Kṛpācārya, Karṇa, Duryodhana, Aśvatthāmā, the Pāṇḍavas and other close friends.

COMMENTARY

This chapter describes Akrūra’s visit to Hastināpura and his return to Mathurā, after learning about Dhṛtarāṣṭra’s ill treatment of the Pāṇḍavas.

The phrase “marked with the fame” (*yaśo-aṅkitam*) means that the rulers of the Puru dynasty had constructed many temples and homes for the *brāhmaṇas*. Akrūra saw Dhṛtarāṣṭra (*ambikeyaḥ*), Bāhlika with his son Somadatta, Drona (*bhāradvājaṁ*), Kṛpa (*gautamam*) and the rest.

|| 10.49.3 ||

yathāvad upasaṅgamya bandhubhir gāndinī-sutaḥ

sampṛṣṭas taiḥ suhṛd-vārtāṁ svayaṁ cāpṛcchad avyayam

TRANSLATION

After Akrūra, the son of Gāndinī, had appropriately greeted all his relatives and friends, they asked him for news of their family members, and he in turn asked about their welfare.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra asked about their welfare (*avyayam*).

|| 10.49.4 ||

uvāsa katicin māsān rājño vṛtta-vivitsayā

duṣprajasyālpa-sārasya khala-cchandānuvartinaḥ

TRANSLATION

He remained in Hastināpura for several months to scrutinize the conduct of the weak-willed King, who had bad sons and who was inclined to give in to the whims of mischievous advisers.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra wanted to observe the behavior of the king, who had wicked sons (*duṣprajasya:asat-putrasya*), who was weak-willed (*ālpa-sārasya:manda-dhṛteḥ*), and whose nature was to follow the desires (*chanda*) of mischievous men (*khala*) like Karṇa.

|| 10.49.5-6 ||

teja ojo balaṁ vīryaṁ praśrayādīṁś ca sad-guṇān

prajānurāgaṁ pārtheṣu na sahadbhiś cikīṛṣitam

kṛtaṁ ca dhārtarāṣṭrair yad gara-dānādy apeśalam

ācakhyau sarvam evāsmai pṛthā vidura eva ca

TRANSLATION

Kuntī and Vidura described to Akrūra in detail the evil intentions of Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons, who could not tolerate the great qualities of Kuntī's sons—such as their powerful influence, military skill, physical strength, bravery and humility—or the intense affection the citizens had for them. Kuntī and Vidura also told Akrūra about how the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra had tried to poison the Pāṇḍavas and carry out other such plots.

COMMENTARY

The sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra could not tolerate the influence (*tejaḥ*), skill with weapons (*oja*), strength (*balaṁ*), courage (*vīryam*) and the other good qualities of the Pāṇḍavas. Kunti and Vidura also described the unjust (*apeśalam*) acts committed by them against the Pāṇḍavas, such as the giving of poison (*gara-dān:viṣa*), and what they intended (*cikīṛṣitam*) to do in the future.

|| 10.49.7 ||

pṛthā tu bhrātaraṁ prāptam akrūram upasṛtya tam

uvāca janma-nilayaṁ smaranty aśru-kalekṣaṇā

TRANSLATION

Kuntīdevī, taking advantage of her brother Akrūra's visit, approached him confidentially. While remembering her birthplace, she spoke with tears in her eyes.

COMMENTARY

This verse and those following describe events previous to Queen Kuntī's description to Akrūra in verses five and six. Kuntī had traces (*kale:leśā*) of tears (*aśru*) in her eyes as she spoke.

|| 10.49.8 ||

api smaranti naḥ saumya pitarau bhrātaraś ca me

bhaginyau bhrātṛ-putrāś ca jāmayaḥ sakhya eva ca

TRANSLATION

[Queen Kuntī said:] O gentle one, do my parents, brothers, sisters, nephews, family women and girlhood friends still remember us?

COMMENTARY

Queen Kuntī said, "Do our parents, brothers, sisters, nephews, girlhood friends and the womenfolk (*jāmayaḥ*) still remember us?"

|| 10.49.9 ||

bhrātreyo bhagavān kṛṣṇaḥ śaraṇyo bhakta-vatsalaḥ

paitṛ-ṣvasreyān smarati rāmaś cāmburuhekṣaṇaḥ

TRANSLATION

Does my nephew Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality and the compassionate shelter of His devotees, still remember His aunt's sons? And does lotus-eyed Rāma remember them also?

COMMENTARY

Kuntī's phrase "His father's sister's sons" (*paitṛ-svasreyān*) means "my sons."

|| 10.49.10 ||

sapatna-madhye śocantīṁ vṛkānāṁ hariṇīm iva

sāntvayiṣyati māṁ vākyaiḥ pitṛ-hīnāṁś ca bālakān

TRANSLATION

Now that I am suffering in the midst of my enemies like a doe in the midst of wolves, will Kṛṣṇa come to console me and my fatherless sons with His words?

COMMENTARY

Kuntī said, “Will Kṛṣṇa console me who am lamenting among enemies like a doe among wolves (*vṛkānām*)?” Immediately after the word *vṛkānām* the word *madhye* (among) should be supplied to complete the implied idea.

|| 10.49.11 ||

kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa mahā-yogin viśvātman viśva-bhāvana

prapannāṁ pāhi govinda śiśubhiś cāvasīdatīm

TRANSLATION

Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa! O great yogi! O Supreme Soul and protector of the universe! O Govinda! Please protect me, who have surrendered to You. I and my sons are being overwhelmed by trouble.

COMMENTARY

The words *mahā-yogin* (great *yogī*) imply, “Even though You are situated in Mathurā, You can hear my words of lamentation! O soul of the universe (*viśvātman*), being also in my heart, You can certainly hear me!” *Viśva-bhāvana* (protector of the universe) implies, “You protect the whole universe, so what trouble is it for You to protect me?” “O Govinda, pleasure of the senses, please become visible before my eyes, so that I may admire You!”

|| 10.49.12 ||

nānyat tava padāmbhojāt paśyāmi śaraṇaṁ nṛṇām

bibhyatāṁ mṛtyu-saṁsārād īsvarasyāpavargikāt

TRANSLATION

For persons fearful of death and rebirth, I see no shelter other than Your liberating lotus feet, for You are the Supreme Lord.

COMMENTARY

Kuntī said, “I do not see any shelter other than Your lotus feet which can give liberation (*āpavargikāt*).”

|| 10.49.13 ||

namaḥ kṛṣṇāya śuddhāya brahmaṇe paramātmane

yogeśvarāya yogāya tvām ahaṁ śaraṇaṁ gatā

TRANSLATION

I offer my obeisances unto You, Kṛṣṇa, the supreme pure, the Absolute Truth and the Supersoul, the Lord of pure devotional service and the source of all knowledge. I have come to You for shelter.

COMMENTARY

The word *yogāya* (unto Kṛṣṇa) means that Kṛṣṇa should be worshiped by pure devotional service. The word *suddhāya* (to the pure) means that Kṛṣṇa transcends *māyā*, although He is appearing before my eyes. The word *brahmaṇe* means that Kṛṣṇa should be worshiped by various kinds of knowledge. *Parama-ātmane* means Kṛṣṇa is the worshipful object of the yogīs, since the various kinds of *yoga* are intermediate means toward the goal of attaining Kṛṣṇa (*yoga-īśvarāya*). The word *yogāya* refers to the very means and identity of all these methods.

|| 10.49.14 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

ity anusmṛtya sva-janaṁ kṛṣṇaṁ ca jagad-īśvaram

prārudad duḥkhitā rājan bhavatāṁ prapitāmahī

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus meditating on her family members and also on Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the universe, your great-grandmother Kuntīdevī began to cry out in grief, O King.

COMMENTARY

Kuntī, the great grandmother (*prapitāmahī*) of Parīkṣit, then cried.

|| 10.49.15 ||

sama-duḥkha-sukho 'krūro viduraś ca mahā-yaśāḥ

sāntvayām āsatuḥ kuntīṁ tat-putrotpatti-hetubhiḥ

TRANSLATION

Both Akrūra, who shared Queen Kuntī's distress and happiness, and the illustrious Vidura consoled the Queen by reminding her of the extraordinary way her sons had taken birth.

COMMENTARY

Vidura and Akrūra, who shared Queen Kuntī's distress and happiness, consoled Queen Kuntī by reminding her of the extraordinary way her sons took birth as expansions of Dharma, Vāyu, Indra and the Aśvinī Kumāras. They told Kuntī, "No ordinary mortal can possibly vanquish your powerful sons, the Pāṇḍavas, since they were fathered by such exalted demigods."

|| 10.49.16 ||

yāsyan rājānam abhyetya viṣamaṁ putra-lālasam

avadat suhṛdāṁ madhye bandhubhiḥ sauhṛdoditam

TRANSLATION

The ardent affection King Dhṛtarāṣṭra felt for his sons had made him act unjustly toward the Pāṇḍavas. Just before leaving, Akrūra approached the King, who was seated among his friends and supporters, and related to him the message that his relatives—Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Balarāma—had sent out of friendship.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra went along with friends like Vidura and spoke friendly words to Dhṛtarāṣṭra who was situated among his relatives (*suhṛdāṁ*) such as Bhīṣma.

|| 10.49.17 ||

akrūra uvāca

bho bho vaicitravīrya tvaṁ kurūṇāṁ kīrti-vardhana

bhrātary uparate pāṇḍāv adhunāsanam āsthitaḥ

TRANSLATION

Akrūra said: O my dear son of Vicitravīrya, O enhancer of the Kurus' glory, your brother Pāṇḍu having passed away, you have now assumed the royal throne.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra was speaking ironically, since the young sons of Pāṇḍu should actually have been occupying the throne.

|| 10.49.18 ||

dharmeṇa pālayann urvīṁ prajāḥ śīlena rañjayan

vartamānaḥ samaḥ sveṣu śreyaḥ kīrtim avāpsyasi

TRANSLATION

By religiously protecting the earth, delighting your subjects with your noble character, and treating all your relatives equally, you will surely achieve success and glory.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra said, "Even though you have usurped the throne unjustly, if you now rule according to the principles of *dharma* and behave properly, you will attain perfection."

|| 10.49.19 ||

anyathā tv ācaraû loke garhito yāsyase tamaḥ

tasmāt samatve vartasva pāṇḍaveṣv ātmajeṣu ca

TRANSLATION

If you act otherwise, however, people will condemn you in this world, and in the next life you will enter the darkness of hell. Remain equally disposed, therefore, toward Pāṇḍu's sons and your own.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra said, "But if you act otherwise you will go to hell (*tamaḥ*)."

|| 10.49.20 ||

neha cātyanta-saṁvāsaḥ kasyacit kenacit saha

rājan svenāpi dehena kim u jāyātmajādibhiḥ

TRANSLATION

In this world no one has any permanent relationship with anyone else, O King. We cannot stay forever even with our own body, what to speak of our wife, children and the rest.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra said, "Even your dear sons, such as Duryodhana, will not remain here forever."

|| 10.49.21 ||

ekaḥ prasūyate jantur eka eva pralīyate

eko 'nubhuṅkte sukṛtam eka eva ca duṣkṛtam

TRANSLATION

Every creature is born alone and dies alone, and alone one experiences the just rewards of his good and evil deeds.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra said, “At the time of birth and death, happiness and distress, one has no real connection with others; he is alone.”

|| 10.49.22 ||

adharmopacitaṁ vittaṁ haranty anye ’lpa-medhasaḥ

sambhojanīyāpadeśair jalānīva jalaukasaḥ

TRANSLATION

In the guise of dear dependents, strangers steal the sinfully acquired wealth of a foolish man, just as the offspring of a fish drink up the water that sustains the fish.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra said, “Furthermore, when a son steals the hard earned money of his father, he should be known as a thief with the name son. The dear dependents like the children and relatives steal the wealth of the foolish father under the pretext that it is the father’s duty to support them (*sambhojanīyaḥ*), just as the offspring of a fish drink up the water sustaining the fish (*jala-okasaḥ*)”

|| 10.49.23 ||

puṣṇāti yān adharmeṇa sva-buddhyā tam apaṇḍitam

te ’kṛtārthaṁ prahiṇvanti prāṇā rāyaḥ sutādayaḥ

TRANSLATION

A fool indulges in sin to maintain his life, wealth and children and other relatives, for he thinks, “These things are mine.” In the end, however, these very things all abandon him, leaving him frustrated.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra said, “Life, wealth (*rāyaḥ*) and sons, which the fool maintains by sinful actions, thinking that they are his, abandon that fool who had not attained his desires.”

|| 10.49.24 ||

svayaṁ kilbiṣam ādāya tais tyakto nārtha-kovidaḥ

asiddhārtho viśaty andhaṁ sva-dharma-vimukhas tamaḥ

TRANSLATION

Abandoned by his socalled dependents, ignorant of the actual goal of life, indifferent to his real duty, and having failed to fulfill his purposes, the foolish soul enters the blindness of hell, taking his sinful reactions with him.

|| 10.49.25 ||

tasmāl lokam imaṁ rājan svapna-māyā-manoratham

vīkṣyāyamyātmanātmānaṁ samaḥ śānto bhava prabho

TRANSLATION

Therefore, O King, looking upon this world as a dream, a magician's illusion or a flight of fancy, please control your mind with intelligence and become equipoised and peaceful, my lord.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra said, "O King! See this world as an illusion, a deception and a dream. It is insubstantial. Use your intelligence to control (*āyamya*) your mind, and you will become peaceful and equal to all."

|| 10.49.26 ||

dhṛtarāṣṭra uvāca

yathā vadati kalyāṇīṁ vācaṁ dāna-pate bhavān

tathānayā na tṛpyāmi martyaḥ prāpya yathāmṛtam

TRANSLATION

Dhṛtarāṣṭra said: O master of charity, I can never be satiated while hearing your auspicious words. Indeed, I am like a mortal who has obtained the nectar of the gods.

COMMENTARY

Dhṛtarāṣṭra thought, “This Akrūra, who thinks himself wise, dares to instruct me in the truth.” Dhṛtarāṣṭra was in fact proud and felt he already knew everything Akrūra was speaking, but to maintain diplomatic gravity he spoke as a saintly gentleman.

Dhṛtarāṣṭra said, “O master of charity! Just as you satisfy the hungry in Mathurā by donating food to them, so here in Hastināpura you gratify me who am ignorant with your donation of knowledge to satisfy this ignorant person.”

|| 10.49.27 ||

tathāpi sūnṛtā saumya hṛdi na sthīyate cale

putrānurāga-viṣame vidyut saudāmanī yathā

TRANSLATION

Even so, gentle Akrūra, because my unsteady heart is prejudiced by affection for my sons, these pleasing words of yours cannot remain fixed there, just as lightning cannot remain fixed in a cloud.

COMMENTARY

Dhṛtarāṣṭra said, “These pleasing words (*sūnṛtā*) of yours cannot remain in my fickle heart, anymore than lightning can remain fixed in a cloud.” According to the Viṣva-kośa dictionary, *sudāman* means cloud and *saudāmanī* means that which is born from the cloud, lightning.

|| 10.49.28 ||

īśvarasya vidhiṁ ko nu vidhunoty anyathā pumān

bhūmer bhārāvatārāya yo ’vatīrṇo yadoḥ kule

TRANSLATION

Who can defy the injunctions of the Supreme Lord, who has now descended in the Yadu dynasty to diminish the earth's burden?

COMMENTARY

Dhṛtarāṣṭra said, "Who can transgress the arrangements (*vidhi*) of the Lord by any method (*anyathā*)? No one can. You are the proof of this. You could not make me have proper judgment, despite all of your instructions."

Akrūra replied, "But that same Supreme Lord is now present in your own dynasty!"

Dhṛtarāṣṭra answered with the word *bhūmer* (earth). "That Lord is present in your house, and has been born in the Yadu family to relieve the burden of the earth. Therefore you should simply go back to Kṛṣṇa, and inform Him that you tried to impress my mind but were unsuccessful."

|| 10.49.29 ||

yo durvimarśa-pathayā nija-māyayedaṁ

sṛṣṭvā guṇān vibhajate tad-anupraviṣṭaḥ

tasmai namo duravabodha-vihāra-tantra-

saṁsāra-cakra-gataye parameśvarāya

TRANSLATION

I offer my obeisances to Him, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who creates this universe by the inconceivable activity of His material energy and then distributes the various modes of nature by entering within the creation. From Him, the meaning of whose pastimes is unfathomable, come both the entangling cycle of birth and death and the process of deliverance from it.

COMMENTARY

Dhṛtarāṣṭra then offered his respects to the Lord: "He creates this universe by the inconceivable activity of His material energy. After entering the universe He divides the *guṇas* into goodness, passion and ignorance. I offer my respects to the Supreme Lord, who is the deliverer from the wheel of *saṁsāra*, and whose pastimes are difficult to understand."

“Akrūra, Kṛṣṇa inspired you to, ‘Enlighten Dhṛtarāṣṭra,’ by sending you here to give me knowledge. And Kṛṣṇa also inspired me, ‘Don’t be enlightened.’ Who can fathom the purpose of Kṛṣṇa’s incomprehensible pastimes? And don’t tell me that I have fallen into the wheel of saṁsāra, because I know that Kṛṣṇa will also deliver me in the future (*saṁsāra cakra gati*).”

|| 10.49.30 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

ity abhipretya nṛpater abhiprāyaṁ sa yādavaḥ

suhṛdbhiḥ samanujñātaḥ punar yadu-purīm agāt

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having thus apprised himself of the King’s attitude, Akrūra, the descendant of Yadu, took permission from his well-wishing relatives and friends and returned to the capital of the Yādavas.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra returned to Mathurā after ascertaining (*abhiprāyaṁ*) the intention of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, who would not give up his partiality to his own sons.

|| 10.49.31 ||

śaśaṁsa rāma-kṛṣṇābhyāṁ dhṛtarāṣṭra-viceṣṭitam

pāṇḍavān prati kauravya yad-arthaṁ preṣitaḥ svayam

TRANSLATION

Akrūra reported to Lord Balarāma and Lord Kṛṣṇa how Dhṛtarāṣṭra was behaving toward the Pāṇḍavas. Thus, O descendant of the Kurus, he fulfilled the purpose for which he had been sent.

Thus ends the commentary on the Forty Ninth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Fifty

Kṛṣṇa Establishes the City of Dvārakā

|| 10.50.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

astiḥ prāptiś ca kaṁsasya mahiṣyau bharatarṣabha

mṛte bhartari duḥkhārte īyatuḥ sma pitur gṛhān

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: When Kaṁsa was killed, O heroic descendant of Bharata, his two queens, Asti and Prāpti, went to their father's house in great distress.

COMMENTARY

I offer respects to my *guru*, so that I may use my intelligence to explain the second half of the Tenth Canto as I did the first part. In this chapter, Kṛṣṇa defeats Jarāsandha seventeen times. Then supposedly out of fear of having to fight with him an eighteenth time, Kṛṣṇa brought His subjects to Dvārakā.

|| 10.50.2 ||

pitre magadha-rājāya jarāsandhāya duḥkhite

vedayāṁ cakratuḥ sarvam ātma-vaidhavya-kāraṇam

TRANSLATION

The sorrowful queens told their father, King Jarāsandha of Magadha, all about how they had become widows.

|| 10.50.3 ||

sa tad apriyam ākarṇya śokāmarṣa-yuto nṛpa

ayādavīṁ mahīṁ kartuṁ cakre paramam udyamam

TRANSLATION

Hearing this odious news, O King, Jarāsandha was filled with sorrow and anger, and he began the greatest possible endeavor to rid the earth of the Yādavas.

|| 10.50.4 ||

akṣauhiṇībhir viṁśatyā tisṛbhiś cāpi saṁvṛtaḥ

yadu-rājadhānīṁ mathurāṁ nyarudhat sarvato diśam

TRANSLATION

With a force of twenty-three akṣauhiṇī divisions, he laid siege to the Yadu capital, Mathurā, on all sides.

|| 10.50.5-6 ||

nirīkṣya tad-balaṁ kṛṣṇa udvelam iva sāgaram

sva-puraṁ tena saṁruddhaṁ sva-janaṁ ca bhayākulam

cintayām āsa bhagavān hariḥ kāraṇa-mānuṣaḥ

tad-deśa-kālānuguṇaṁ svāvatāra-prayojanam

TRANSLATION

Although Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is the original cause of this world, when He descended to the earth He played the role of a human being. Thus when He saw Jarāsandha's assembled army surrounding His city like a great ocean overflowing its shores, and when He saw how this army was striking fear into His subjects, the Lord considered what His suitable response should be according to the time, place and specific purpose of His current incarnation.

COMMENTARY

In great wonder Kṛṣṇa observed Jarāsandha's army, which was like a vast ocean overflowing (*udvelam*) its shores. It may be questioned, what is the need for this wondering? There is no need at all for Kṛṣṇa to wonder since He is the original cause (*kāraṇa*) of everything. Yet it is happening because Kṛṣṇa is displaying pastimes as an ordinary human being (*mānuṣya*). Kṛṣṇa's actual thoughts are described in four verses (Texts 7-10).

|| 10.50.7-8 ||

haniṣyāmi balaṁ hy etad bhuvi bhāraṁ samāhitam

māgadhena samānītaṁ vaśyānāṁ sarva-bhūbhujām

akṣauhiṇībhiḥ saṅkhyātaṁ bhaṭāśva-ratha-kuñjaraiḥ

māgadhas tu na hantavyo bhūyaḥ kartā balodyamam

TRANSLATION

[The Supreme Lord thought:] Since it is such a burden on the earth, I will destroy Jarāsandha's army, consisting of akṣauhiṇīs of foot soldiers, horses, chariots and elephants, which the King of Māgadha has assembled from all subservient kings and brought together here. But Jarāsandha himself should not be killed, since in the future he will certainly assemble another army.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa thought, “I will destroy Jarāsandha’s army which is a burden to the earth. Jarāsandha, however, should not be killed because he will enthusiastically bring another army (*balaṁ:sainyaṁ*) of demons for Me to annihilate.”

|| 10.50.9 ||

etad-artho ’vatāro ’yaṁ bhū-bhāra-haraṇāya me

saṁrakṣaṇāya sādhūnāṁ kṛto ’nyeṣāṁ vadhāya ca

TRANSLATION

This is the purpose of My present incarnation—to relieve the earth of its burden, protect the pious and kill the impious.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa thought, “I have come as the Kṛṣṇa *avatāra* to relieve the burden of the earth, to protect the devotees and to kill the demons.”

|| 10.50.10 ||

anyo ’pi dharma-rakṣāyai dehaḥ saṁbhriyate mayā

virāmāyāpy adharmasya kāle prabhavataḥ kvacit

TRANSLATION

I also assume other bodies to protect religion and to end irreligion whenever it flourishes in the course of time.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa thought, “I also assume other bodies such as Varāha to protect religion and destroy irreligion.”

|| 10.50.11 ||

evaṁ dhyāyati govinda ākāśāt sūrya-varcasau

rathāv upasthitau sadyaḥ sa-sūtau sa-paricchadau

TRANSLATION

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] As Lord Govinda was thinking in this way, two chariots as effulgent as the sun suddenly descended from the sky. They were complete with drivers and equipment.

COMMENTARY

As Govinda was thinking in this way, suddenly by His desire two chariots came from Vaikuṇṭha (*ākāśāt*) and stood near (*upasthitau*) Him.

|| 10.50.12 ||

āyudhāni ca divyāni purāṇāni yadṛcchayā

dṛṣṭvā tāni hṛṣīkeśaḥ saṅkarṣaṇam athābravīt

TRANSLATION

The Lord's eternal divine weapons also appeared before Him spontaneously. Seeing these, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Lord of the senses, addressed Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa.

|| 10.50.13-14 ||

paśyārya vyasanaṁ prāptaṁ yadūnāṁ tvāvatāṁ prabho

eṣa te ratha āyāto dayitāny āyudhāni ca

etad-arthaṁ hi nau janma sādhūnām īśa śarma-kṛt

trayo-viṁśaty-anīkākhyaṁ bhūmer bhāram apākuru

TRANSLATION

[The Supreme Lord said:] My respected elder brother, see this danger which has beset Your dependents, the Yadus! And see, dear master, how Your personal chariot and favorite weapons have come before You. The purpose for which We have taken birth, My Lord, is to secure the welfare of Our devotees. Please now remove from the earth the burden of these twenty-three armies.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “My respected elder brother, You are the Lord of the Yadus who are protected (*avatām*) by You (*tva*). Now just see what has beset Your dependents, the Yadus.”

|| 10.50.15 ||

evaṁ sammantrya dāśārhau daṁśitau rathinau purāt

nirjagmatuḥ svāyudhāḍhyau balenālpīyasā vṛtau

TRANSLATION

After Lord Kṛṣṇa had thus invited His brother, the two Dāśārhas, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, wearing armor and displaying Their resplendent weapons, drove out of the city in Their chariots. Only a very small contingent of soldiers accompanied Them.

|| 10.50.16 ||

śaṅkhaṁ dadhmau vinirgatya harir dāruka-sārathiḥ

tato ’bhūt para-sainyānāṁ hṛdi vitrāsa-vepathuḥ

TRANSLATION

As Lord Kṛṣṇa came out of the city with Dāruka at the reins of His chariot, He blew His conchshell, and the enemy soldiers’ hearts began to tremble with fear.

|| 10.50.17 ||

tāv āha māgadho vīkṣya he kṛṣṇa puruṣādhama

na tvayā yoddhum icchāmi bālenaikena lajjayā

guptena hi tvayā manda na yotsye yāhi bandhu-han

TRANSLATION

Jarāsandha looked at the two of Them and said: O Kṛṣṇa, lowest of men! I do not wish to fight alone with You, since it would be a shame to fight with a mere boy.

You fool who keep Yourself hidden, O murderer of Your relatives, go away! I will not fight with You.

COMMENTARY

Taking the external meaning, Jarāsandha said, “O Kṛṣṇa, lowest of men (*puruṣa adhama*)! I am ashamed (*lajjayā*) to fight with You, a mere boy (*balena*) who hides (*guptena*) Himself in Gokula as a *vaiśya*. O fool (*manda*)! O killer of Your uncle (*bandu han*)! I will not fight with You. Go away!”

There is another meaning skillfully contained in the same words: Jarāsandha said, “O great personality to whom all others are inferior (*puruṣādhama*)!” [In other words, Jarāsandha is saying, “Kṛṣṇa is the *puruṣottama*, best of living beings.”] I will not fight with You, whose child (*balena*) is Brahmā (*ka*); for You are the Lord of all lords. I am ashamed (*lajjayā*) to fight with You because I, having lived a sinful life, am unqualified. You are hidden (*guptena*) in everyone’s heart, and are therefore invisible to material vision, so I do not desire to fight with You.”

According to Sanskrit grammar, the words *tvayā manda* can also be divided as *tvaya āmanda*. In this case Jarāsandha is indicating that Kṛṣṇa is not foolish but rather most alert. The word *bandhu* was used by Jarāsandha in the sense of “relative,” since Lord Kṛṣṇa killed His maternal uncle, Kaṁsa. However, *bandhu* comes from the verb *bandh*, “to bind,” and therefore *bandhu-han* can be understood as “one who destroys the bondage of ignorance.”

|| 10.50.18 ||

tava rāma yadi śraddhā yudhyasva dhairyam udvaha

hitvā vā mac-charaiś chinnaṁ dehaṁ svar yāhi māṁ jahi

TRANSLATION

You, Rāma, should gather Your courage and fight with me, if You think You can do it. You may either give up Your body when it is cut to pieces by my arrows, and thus attain to heaven, or else kill me.

COMMENTARY

Jarāsandha suspected that Balarāma’s body was invincible, and thus he offered what might be a more practical alternative, that Balarāma kill Jarāsandha. Another meaning is: “Go away from me since I am so sinful and go to Vaikuṇṭha, having left aside my body cut by arrows.”

|| 10.50.19 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

na vai śūrā vikatthante darśayanty eva pauruṣam

na gṛhṇīmo vaco rājann āturasya mumūrṣataḥ

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord said: Real heroes do not simply boast but rather show their prowess in action. We cannot take seriously the words of one who is full of anxiety and who wants to die.

|| 10.50.20 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

jarā-sutas tāv abhisṛtya mādhavau mahā-balaughena balīyasāvṛnot

sa-sainya-yāna-dhvaja-vāji-sārathī sūryānalau vāyur ivābhra-reṇubhiḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Just as the wind covers the sun with clouds or a fire with dust, the son of Jarā marched toward the two descendants of Madhu and with his huge assemblage of armies surrounded Them and Their soldiers, chariots, flags, horses and charioteers.

COMMENTARY

As the wind covers the sun with clouds or a fire with dust, Jarāsandha covered the two Mādhavas, who appeared in the Madhu dynasty (*mādhavau*), by surrounding Them with his armies. However, this was just an apparent covering; for nothing can cover the sun.

|| 10.50.21 ||

suparṇa-tāla-dhvaja-cihitnau rathāv alakṣayantyo hari-rāmayor mṛdhe

striyaḥ purāṭṭālaka-harmya-gopuraṁ samāśritāḥ sammumuhuḥ śucārditaḥ

TRANSLATION

The women stood in the watchtowers, palaces and high gates of the city. When they could no longer see Kṛṣṇa's and Balarāma's chariots, identified by banners marked with the emblems of Garuḍa and a palm tree, they were struck with grief and fainted.

COMMENTARY

This verse particularly mentions that the women (*striyaḥ*) were filled with intense grief (*sucārditaḥ*). This is because of their extraordinary attachment to Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, which far exceeded that of the men.

|| 10.50.22 ||

hariḥ parānīka-payomucāṁ muhuḥ śilīmukhāty-ulbaṇa-varṣa-pīḍitam

sva-sainyam ālokya surāsurārcitaṁ vyasphūrjayac chārṅga-śarāsanottamam

TRANSLATION

Seeing His army tormented by the relentless and savage rain of arrows from the massive opposing forces gathered like clouds about Him, Lord Hari twanged His excellent bow, Śārṅga, which both gods and demons worship.

|| 10.50.23 ||

gṛhṇan niśaṅgād atha sandadhac charān vikṛṣya muñcan śita-bāṇa-pūgān

nighnan rathān kuñjara-vāji-pattīn nirantaraṁ yadvad alāta-cakram

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa took arrows from His quiver, fixed them on the bowstring, pulled back, and released endless torrents of sharp shafts, which struck the enemy's chariots, elephants, horses and infantrymen. The Lord shooting His arrows resembled a blazing circle of fire.

COMMENTARY

Seeing His own army afflicted by the extremely fierce downpour of arrows (*silīmukha:bāṇāḥ*) from the cloud (*payomucāṁ:meghāḥ*) of the enemy troops, Kṛṣṇa drew His bow.

Verse twenty-three answers the question, “In what manner did Kṛṣṇa shoot arrows?” Continuously drawing arrows from His quiver one by one, Kṛṣṇa fixed them on the bow string, pulled back the string and released them, thereby destroying all the chariots and other things. The word continuously (*nirantaram*) modifies all the actions such as picking up the bow, fixing the arrows, pulling, shooting and striking. Although following in a sequential order, all the actions seemed simultaneous to the onlookers. It appeared that Kṛṣṇa was doing millions of actions at once. Thus the bow releasing arrows against the enemy troops, which were surrounding Mathurā on all sides, appeared like a firebrand, just as a blazing piece of wood appears like a circle of fire when whirled around.

|| 10.50.24 ||

nirbhinna-kumbhāḥ kariṇo nipetur anekaśo ’śvāḥ śara-vṛkṇa-kandharāḥ

rathā hatāśva-dhvaja-sūta-nāyakāḥ padāyataś chinna-bhujoru-kandharāḥ

TRANSLATION

Elephants fell to the ground, their foreheads split open, cavalry horses fell with severed necks, chariots fell with their horses, flags, drivers and masters all shattered, and foot soldiers collapsed with severed arms, thighs and shoulders.

|| 10.50.25-28 ||

sañchidyamāna-dvipadebha-vājinām aṅga-prasūtāḥ śataśo ’sṛg-āpagāḥ

bhujāhayaḥ pūruṣa-śīrṣa-kacchapā hata-dvipa-dvīpa-haya grahākulāḥ

karoru-mīnā nara-keśa-śaivalā dhanus-taraṅgāyudha-gulma-saṅkulāḥ

acchūrikāvarta-bhayānakā mahā-maṇi-pravekābharaṇāśma-śarkarāḥ

pravartitā bhīru-bhayāvahā mṛdhe manasvināṁ harṣa-karīḥ parasparam

vinighnatārīn muṣalena durmadān saṅkarṣaṇenāparīmeya-tejasā

balaṁ tad aṅgārṇava-durga-bhairavaṁ duranta-pāraṁ magadhendra-pālitam

kṣayaṁ praṇītaṁ Vasudeva-putrayor vikrīḍitaṁ taj jagad-īśayoḥ param

TRANSLATION

On the battlefield, hundreds of rivers of blood flowed from the limbs of the humans, elephants and horses who had been cut to pieces. In these rivers arms resembled snakes; human heads, turtles; dead elephants, islands; and dead horses, crocodiles. Hands and thighs appeared like fish, human hair like waterweeds, bows like waves, and various weapons like clumps of bushes. The rivers of blood teemed with all of these.

Chariot wheels looked like terrifying whirlpools, and precious gems and ornaments resembled stones and gravel in the rushing red rivers, which aroused fear in the timid, joy in the wise. With the blows of His plow weapon the immeasurably powerful Lord Balarāma destroyed Magadhendra's military force. And though this force was as unfathomable and fearsome as an impassable ocean, for the two sons of Vasudeva, the Lords of the universe, the battle was hardly more than play.

COMMENTARY

(Text 25-26) Rivers of blood flowed from the limbs of the men, elephants and horses severed by the arrows of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. The metaphor of the river is described. In that river the arms resembled snakes, the dead elephants appeared to be islands or high areas, and the horses looked like crocodiles. These quivering crocodiles filled up the river. The rivers were dangerous with whirlpools of shields or wheels of chariots. The big jewels and fine ornaments were the stones and gravel in the rivers. These rivers gave joy to the intelligent (*manasvinām*). Oh king! The army of Jarāsandha was as dangerous and hard to cross as an unfathomably deep ocean without a shore. Nevertheless, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma crossed this ocean without any effort at all as if They were just playing.

|| 10.50.29 ||

sthity-udbhavāntaṁ bhuvana-trayasya yaḥ samīhite 'nanta-guṇaḥ sva-līlayā

na tasya citraṁ para-pakṣa-nigrahas tathāpi martyānuvidhasya varṇyate

TRANSLATION

For Him who orchestrates the creation, maintenance and destruction of the three worlds and who possesses unlimited spiritual qualities, it is hardly amazing that He subdues an opposing party. Still, when the Lord does so, imitating human behavior, sages glorify His acts.

COMMENTARY

"If Kṛṣṇa is the Lord of the universe, how can He derive any pleasure in fighting with the most insignificant *jīvas* who are no equal to Him? If Kṛṣṇa experiences no taste for this, then what is the use of describing it?" This verse answers the question.

"What is so astonishing about Kṛṣṇa's fighting? For Kṛṣṇa, who appears in human body and performs activities like a human, it is suitable. Kṛṣṇa assumes a human form and behaves accordingly. For Kṛṣṇa to defeat Jarāsandha in that form by which He creates the universe would not be relishable, since it would be an uninteresting mismatch. But if Kṛṣṇa becomes a human being and defeats such a mighty personality as Jarāsandha, then such a human opponent for a human would be suitable."

Nor should one argue that Kṛṣṇa's human form is not His original form (*svarūpa*), because the scriptures say: *narākṛti para-brahma kāraṇa-mānuṣaḥ*, "The Supreme Absolute Truth (*para-brahma*), for His own purpose, appears in a humanlike form, although He is the source of everything." (*Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad*)

Similarly, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.14.32) states, *yan-mitraṁ paramānandaṁ pūrṇaṁ brahma sanātanam*, "The eternal Supreme Brahman, the source of transcendental bliss, has become their friend."

|| 10.50.30 ||

jagrāha virathaṁ rāmo jarāsandhaṁ mahā-balam

hatānīkāvaśiṣṭāsuṁ siṁhaḥ siṁham ivaujasā

TRANSLATION

Jarāsandha, with his chariot lost and all his soldiers dead, was left with only his breath. At that point Lord Balarāma forcibly seized the powerful warrior, just as one lion takes hold of another.

COMMENTARY

Balarāma seized Jarāsandha, whose army was killed and whose life airs alone remained.

|| 10.50.31 ||

badhyamānaṁ hatārātiṁ pāśair vāruṇa-mānuṣaiḥ

vārayām āsa govindas tena kārya-cikīrṣayā

TRANSLATION

With the divine noose of Varuṇa and other, mortal ropes, Balarāma began tying up Jarāsandha, who had killed so many foes. But Lord Govinda still had a purpose to fulfill through Jarāsandha, and thus He asked Balarāma to stop.

COMMENTARY

Govinda prevented Balarāma from tying up Jarāsandha, who was almost dead, because He desired that Jarāsandha should repeatedly gather together the demoniac armies who were a burden to the earth and needed to be killed. The word *hatārātim* means "who has killed his enemies," or "through whom his enemies would be killed."

|| 10.50.32-33 ||

sā mukto loka-nāthābhyāṁ vrīḍito vīra-sammataḥ

tapase kṛta-saṅkalpo vāritaḥ pathi rājabhiḥ

vākyaiḥ pavitrārtha-padair nayanaiḥ prākṛtair api

sva-karma-bandha-prāpto 'yaṁ yadubhis te parābhavaḥ

TRANSLATION

Jarāsandha, whom fighters had highly honored, was ashamed after being released by the two Lords of the universe, and thus he decided to undergo penances. On the road, however, several kings convinced him with both spiritual wisdom and mundane arguments that he should give up his idea of self-abnegation. They told him, "Your defeat by the Yadus was simply the unavoidable reaction of your past karma."

COMMENTARY

Jarāsandha was ashamed because others considered him to be valiant (*vīra-sammataḥ*), therefore he should have died in battle.

The word *pavitrāṇī* means "expressing advice as to the reality of the situation." The word *nayanaiḥ* means "with logical arguments" and *prākrtaiḥ* means "mundane."

Jarāsandha's friends stopped him from doing austerities by giving philosophical teachings with mundane moral precepts. The philosophical advice was, "Your defeat was already written on your forehead as a result of your *karma*, so how could you avoid it? After all, the *Smṛti* scripture states, 'Inevitably you must enjoy the results of acts committed.'"

By a double meaning the same statement gives advice according to moral precepts. "If your defeat was due to *prārabdha karma*, then why should you be ashamed? It cannot be avoided in that case. What intelligent man is going to think that you are weaker than these paltry Yādavas? Therefore, in victory over one of them there is no glory, and in defeat by one of them there is no shame. There is nothing exceptional in the lion Jarāsandha winning over the black deer Kṛṣṇa, and no blame incurred if he fails to win. Even when warriors win or lose in battle with equal fighters they should not feel pride or humiliation, so what to speak of when they win or lose with persons who are so inferior?"

|| 10.50.34 ||

hateṣu sarvānīkeṣu nṛpo bārhadrathas tadā

upekṣito bhagavatā magadhān durmanā yayau

TRANSLATION

All of his armies having been killed, and himself neglected by the Personality of Godhead, King Jarāsandha, son of Bṛhadratha, then sadly returned to the kingdom of the Magadhas.

COMMENTARY

The son of Bṛhadratha, Bārhadratha or Jarāsandha, went to Magadha.

|| 10.50.35-36 ||

mukundo 'py akṣata-balo nistīrṇāri-balārṇavaḥ

vikīryamāṇaḥ kusumais trīdaśair anumoditaḥ

māthurair upasaṅgamya vijvarair muditātmabhiḥ

upagīyamāna-vijayaḥ sūta-māgadha-vandibhiḥ

TRANSLATION

Lord Mukunda had crossed the ocean of His enemy's armies with His own military force completely intact. He received congratulations from the denizens of heaven, who showered Him with flowers. The people of Mathurā, relieved of their feverish anxiety and filled with joy, came out to meet Him as professional bards, heralds and panegyrists sang in praise of His victory.

COMMENTARY

Although not written in the verse, it is understood that Mukunda entered Mathurā where He was greeted as described here.

|| 10.50.37-38 ||

śaṅkha-dundubhayo nedur bherī-tūryāṇy anekaśaḥ

vīṇā-veṇu-mṛdaṅgāni puraṁ praviśati prabhau

sikta-mārgāṁ hṛṣṭa-janāṁ patākābhir abhyalaṅkṛtām

nirghuṣṭāṁ brahma-ghoṣeṇa kautukābaddha-toraṇām

TRANSLATION

As the Lord entered His city, conchshells and kettledrums sounded, and many drums, horns, vīṇās, flutes and mṛdaṅgas played in concert. The boulevards were sprinkled with water, there were banners everywhere, and the gateways were decorated for the celebration. The citizens were elated, and the city resounded with the chanting of Vedic hymns.

COMMENTARY

These verses describe the city of Mathurā.

|| 10.50.39 ||

nicīyamāno nārībhir mālya-dadhy-akṣatāṅkuraiḥ

nirīkṣyamāṇaḥ sa-snehaṁ prīty-utkalita-locanaiḥ

TRANSLATION

As the women of the city affectionately looked at the Lord, their eyes wide open with love, they scattered flower garlands, yogurt, parched rice and newly grown sprouts upon Him.

COMMENTARY

The completion of this verse is understood to be: “Upon entering the city, He was sprinkled with flowers.” However the grammar is changed from *praviśati prabhau* (locative absolute) in verse 37 *to prabhuḥ praviśat* (the Lord entered Mathurā). Or else the subject of this verse is in the next verse (40) *prādiśat prabhuḥ* (the Lord gave to Ugrasena).

|| 10.50.40 ||

āyodhana-gataṁ vittam anantaṁ vīra-bhūṣaṇam

yadu-rājāya tat sarvam āhṛtaṁ prādiśat prabhuḥ

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa then presented to the Yadu king all the wealth that had fallen on the battlefield—namely, the countless ornaments of the dead warriors.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa presented Ugrasena with all the jeweled ornaments collected from the bodies of the soldiers, horses and other animals that had fallen on the battlefield (*āyodhana-gataṁ:yuddha-bhūmi*).

|| 10.50.41 ||

evaṁ saptadaśa-kṛtvas tāvaty akṣauhiṇī-balaḥ

yuyudhe māgadho rājā yadubhiḥ kṛṣṇa-pālitaiḥ

TRANSLATION

Seventeen times the King of Magadha met defeat in this very way. And yet throughout these defeats he fought on with his akṣauhiṇī divisions against the forces of the Yadu dynasty who were protected by Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

Jarāsandha had a vast army of twenty three *akṣauhiṇīs*.

|| 10.50.42 ||

akṣiṇvaṁs tad-balaṁ sarvaṁ vṛṣṇayaḥ kṛṣṇa-tejasā

hateṣu sveṣv anīkeṣu tyakto 'gād aribhir nṛpaḥ

TRANSLATION

By the power of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Vṛṣṇis would invariably annihilate all of Jarāsandha's forces, and when all his soldiers had been killed, the King, released by his enemies, would again go away.

COMMENTARY

The Vṛṣṇis destroyed (*akṣiṇvan*) his army.

|| 10.50.43 ||

aṣṭādaśama saṅgrāma āgāmini tad-antarā

nārada-preṣito vīro yavanaḥ pratyadṛśyata

TRANSLATION

Just as the eighteenth battle was about to take place, a barbarian warrior named Kālayavana, sent by Nārada, appeared on the battlefield.

|| 10.50.44 ||

rurodha mathurām etya tisṛbhir mleccha-koṭibhiḥ

nṛ-loke cāpratidvandvo vṛṣṇīn śrutvātma-sammitān

TRANSLATION

Arriving at Mathurā, this Yavana laid siege to the city with thirty million barbarian soldiers. He had never found a human rival worth fighting, but he had heard that the Vṛṣṇis were his equals.

COMMENTARY

The demon Kālayavana was “sent by Nārada” (*nārada-presito*). The story of this is told in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* as follows: Once Gargya, the son of Garga Muni, was ridiculed by His brother-in-law as a “eunuch,” and when the Yādavas heard this they laughed heartily. Gargya was infuriated by their laughter. He set out to the South, thinking, “May I have a son who will bring terror to the Yādavas.” He ate powered iron and worshiped Śiva for twelve years. Obtaining the boon from Śiva, he returned home satisfied, and gave birth to a son through the wife of the childless king of the Yavanas. Kālayavana was the son born to him. Kālayavana, who was as ferocious as Śiva the destroyer, inquired from Nārada, “Presently on this earth who are most powerful kings?” Nārada said, “The Yādavas are the most powerful.” Thus Kālayavana appeared in Mathurā, sent by Nārada.

|| 10.50.45 ||

taṁ dṛṣṭvācintayat kṛṣṇaḥ saṅkarṣaṇa sahāyavān

aho yadūnāṁ vṛjinaṁ prāptaṁ hy ubhayato mahat

TRANSLATION

When Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa saw Kālayavana, Kṛṣṇa thought about the situation and said, “Ah, a great danger now threatens the Yadus from two sides.”

COMMENTARY

Out of affection for the Yādavas, Kṛṣṇa worried, “The Yadus have calamity on both sides, from Kālayavana and Jarāsandha.”

|| 10.50.46 ||

yavano ’yaṁ nirundhe ’smān adya tāvan mahā-balaḥ

māgadho ’py adya vā śvo vā paraśvo vāgamiṣyati

TRANSLATION

“This Yavana is besieging us already, and the mighty King of Magadha will soon arrive here, if not today then tomorrow or the next day.”

|| 10.50.47 ||

āvayoḥ yudhyator asya yady āgantā jarā-sutaḥ

bandhūn haniṣyaty atha vā neṣyate sva-puraṁ balī

TRANSLATION

“If powerful Jarāsandha comes while We two are busy fighting Kālayavana, Jarāsandha may kill Our relatives or else take them away to his capital.”

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa thought, “If Jarāsandha comes while We two are fighting with Kālayavana (*asya*), he may kill our relatives or take them away to his city.”

|| 10.50.48 ||

tasmād adya vidhāsyāmo durgaṁ dvipada-durgamam

tatra jñātīn samādhāya yavanaṁ ghātayāmahe

TRANSLATION

“Therefore We will immediately construct a fortress that no human force can penetrate. Let Us settle our family members there and then kill the barbarian king.”

|| 10.50.49 ||

iti sammantrya bhagavān durgaṁ dvādaśa-yojanam

antaḥ-samudre nagaraṁ kṛtsnādbhutam acīkarat

TRANSLATION

After thus discussing the matter with Balarāma, the Supreme Personality of Godhead had a fortress twelve yojanas in circumference built within the sea. Inside that fort He had a city built containing all kinds of wonderful things.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa built a fortress within the ocean measuring twelve *yojanas*. Eight barleycorns (*yavas*) make one thumb-length (*angula*), twelve of which make one palm. Three palms are one hand, and two hands are called a *kisku*. Two kiskus are called a bow-length (*dhanu*), and two thousand bow-lengths make one *krośa*. Two *krośas* are one *gavyūti*, and two *gavyūtis* are one *yojana*. Kṛṣṇa built a city within the fort.

|| 10.50.50-53 ||

dṛśyate yatra hi tvāṣṭraṁ vijñānaṁ śilpa-naipuṇam

rathyā-catvara-vīthībhir yathā-vāstu vinirmitam

sura-druma-latodyāna-vicitropavanānvitam

hema-śṛṅgair divi-spṛgbhiḥ sphaṭikāṭṭāla-gopuraiḥ

rājatārakuṭaiḥ koṣṭhair hema-kumbhair alaṅkṛtaiḥ

ratna-kūtair gṛhair hemair mahā-mārakata-sthalaiḥ

vāstoṣpatīnāṁ ca gṛhair vallabhībhiś ca nirmitam

cātur-varṇya-janākīrṇaṁ yadu-deva-gṛhollasat

TRANSLATION

In the construction of that city could be seen the full scientific knowledge and architectural skill of Viśvakarmā. There were wide avenues, commercial roads and courtyards laid out on ample plots of land; there were splendid parks, and also gardens stocked with trees and creepers from the heavenly planets. The gateway towers were topped with golden turrets touching the sky, and their upper levels were fashioned of crystal quartz. The gold-covered houses were adorned in front with golden pots and on top with jeweled roofs, and their floors were inlaid with precious emeralds. Beside the houses stood treasury buildings, warehouses, and stables for fine horses, all built of silver and brass. Each residence had a watchtower, and also a temple for its household deity. Filled with citizens of all four social orders, the city was especially beautified by the palaces of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the Yadus.

COMMENTARY

The wisdom of Viśvakarmā (*tvāṣṭraṁ*), manifest as his skill in architecture (*śilpa-naipuṇam*), was seen in the city of Dvārakā. Three and half verses describe that Dvārakā

was constructed with main roads, side roads, yards and houses not extending beyond their designated areas. There were beautiful gardens and parks full of celestial trees and creepers. The horse stables were made of silver, brass and iron, and the houses had gold *kalaśas* and spires of rubies and other jewels. It had temples (*vāstoṣpatīnāṁ gṛha*) with golden towers (*valabhī*) touching the sky. The city was especially beautified with the palaces of Kṛṣṇa (*yadudeva*).

|| 10.50.54 ||

sudharmāṁ pārijātaṁ ca mahendraḥ prāhiṇod dhareḥ

yatra cāvasthito martyo martya-dharmair na yujyate

TRANSLATION

Lord Indra brought Śrī Kṛṣṇa the Sudharmā assembly hall, standing within which a mortal man is not subject to the laws of mortality. Indra also gave the pārijāta tree.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa also placed a *pārijāta* tree in His Dvārakā residence. Here the past tense is used because it occurred prior to the conversation between Śukadeva Gosvāmī and Parīkṣit Mahārāja, even though it happened some time after the city's construction. The word *martya-dharmaiḥ* (laws of mortality) refers to the six pushing agents such as hunger and thirst.

|| 10.50.55 ||

śyāmaika-varṇān varuṇo hayān śuklān mano-javān

aṣṭau nidhi-patiḥ kośān loka-pālo nijodayān

TRANSLATION

Lord Varuṇa offered horses as swift as the mind, some of which were pure dark-blue, others white. The treasurer of the demigods, Kuvera, gave his eight mystic treasures, and the rulers of various planets each presented their own opulences.

COMMENTARY

Kuvera is the master of the treasury and the eight mystic treasures (*nidhis*), which are described as follows:

padmaś caiva mahāpadmo matsya-kūrmau tathaudakaḥ

nīlo mukundaḥ śaṅkhaś ca nidhayo 'ṣṭau prakīrtitāḥ

"The eight mystic treasures are called Padma, Mahāpadma, Matsya, Kūrma, Audaka, Nīla, Mukunda and Saṅkha." The masters of the directions gave their own particular wealth.

|| 10.50.56 ||

yad yad bhagavatā dattam ādhipatyaṁ sva-siddhaye

sarvaṁ pratyarpayām āsur harau bhūmi-gate nṛpa

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord having come to the earth, O King, these demigods now offered Him whatever powers of control He had previously delegated to them for the exercise of their particular authority.

|| 10.50.57 ||

tatra yoga-prabhāvena nītvā sarva-janaṁ hariḥ

prajā-pālena rāmeṇa kṛṣṇaḥ samanumantritaḥ

nirjagāma pura-dvārāt padma-mālī nirāyudhaḥ

TRANSLATION

After transporting all His subjects to the new city by the power of His mystic Yogamāyā, Lord Kṛṣṇa consulted with Lord Balarāma, who had remained in Mathurā to protect it. Then, wearing a garland of lotuses but bearing no weapons, Lord Kṛṣṇa went out of Mathurā by its main gate.

COMMENTARY

Yoga-prabhāvena refers to Kṛṣṇa's *yogamāyā-śakti*.

The citizens of Mathurā were transferred to Dvārakā by her power. This is stated in the *Uttara-khaṇḍa* of the *Padma Purāṇa*:

> *suṣuptān mathurāyān tu paurāṁs tatra janārdanaḥ*
>
> *uddhṛtya sahasā rātrau dvārakāyāṁ nyaveśayat*
>
> *prabuddhās te janāḥ sarve putra-dāra-samanvitāḥ*
>
> *haima-harmya-tale viṣṭā vismayaṁ paramaṁ yayuḥ*

> "In the middle of the night, as the citizens of Mathurā slept, Lord Janārdana suddenly removed them from that city and placed them in Dvārakā. When the men awoke, they were all amazed to find themselves, their children and their wives sitting inside palaces made of gold."

Kṛṣṇa consulted (*samanumantritaḥ*) with Balarāma, "You stay here a short time, and I will use this ploy to kill Jarāsandha."

Thus ends the commentary on the Fiftieth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Fifty-one

The Deliverance of Mucukunda

|| 10.51.1-6 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

taṁ vilokya viniṣkrāntam ujjihānam ivoḍupam

darśanīyatamaṁ śyāmaṁ pīta-kauśeya-vāsasam

śrīvatsa-vakṣasaṁ bhrājat kaustubhāmukta-kandharam

pṛthu-dīrgha-catur-bāhuṁ nava-kañjāruṇekṣaṇam

nitya-pramuditaṁ śrīmat su-kapolaṁ śuci-smitam

mukhāravindaṁ bibhrāṇaṁ sphuran-makara-kuṇḍalam

vāsudevo hy ayam iti pumān śrīvatsa-lāñchanaḥ

catur-bhujo ’ravindākṣo vana-māly ati-sundaraḥ

lakṣaṇair nārada-proktair nānyo bhavitum arhati

nirāyudhaś calan padbhyāṁ yotsye ’nena nirāyudhaḥ

iti niścitya yavanaḥ prādravad taṁ parāṅ-mukham

anvadhāvaj jighṛkṣus taṁ durāpam api yoginām

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Kālayavana saw the Lord come out from Mathurā like the rising moon. The Lord was most beautiful to behold, with His dark-blue complexion and yellow silk garment. Upon His chest He bore the mark of Śrīvatsa, and the Kaustubha gem adorned His neck. His four arms were sturdy and long. He displayed His ever-joyful lotuslike face, with eyes pink like lotuses, beautifully effulgent cheeks, a pristine smile and glittering shark-shaped earrings. The barbarian thought, "This person must indeed be Vāsudeva, since He possesses the characteristics Nārada mentioned: He is marked with Śrīvatsa, He has four arms, His eyes are like lotuses, He wears a garland of forest flowers, and He is extremely handsome. He cannot be anyone else. Since He goes on foot and unarmed, I will fight Him without weapons." Resolving thus, he ran after the Lord, who turned His back and ran away. Kālayavana hoped to catch Lord Kṛṣṇa, though great mystic yogīs cannot attain Him.

COMMENTARY

In this chapter Mucukunda burns up Kālayavana with his glance and satisfies Kṛṣṇa with his prayers. Kṛṣṇa in turn grants a benediction to Mucukunda.

Those who are qualified by devotion can appreciate the beauty of Kṛṣṇa. The demons, however, because of their inimical attitude, cannot taste that beauty even if the Lord appears before their eyes. To show that fact, this verse describes the beauty of Kṛṣṇa as He stood before Kālayavana.

|| 10.51.7 ||

hasta-prāptam ivātmānaṁ harīṇā sa pade pade

nīto darśayatā dūraṁ yavaneśo 'dri-kandaram

TRANSLATION

Appearing virtually within reach of Kālayavana's hands at every moment, Lord Hari led the King of the Yavanas far away to a mountain cave.

COMMENTRY

By letting Himself almost get caught, and then running away time and time again Kṛṣṇa led Kālayavana far off to a cave in the mountain.

|| 10.51.8 ||

palāyanaṁ yadu-kule jātasya tava nocitam

iti kṣipann anugato nainaṁ prāpāhatāśubhaḥ

TRANSLATION

While chasing the Lord, the Yavana cast insults at Him, saying "You took birth in the Yadu dynasty. It's not proper for You to run away!" But still Kālayavana could not reach Lord Kṛṣṇa, because his sinful reactions had not been cleansed away.

|| 10.51.9 ||

evaṁ kṣipto 'pi bhagavān prāviśad giri-kandaram

so 'pi praviṣṭas tatrānyaṁ śayānaṁ dadṛśe naram

TRANSLATION

Although insulted in this way, the Supreme Lord entered the mountain cave. Kālayavana also entered, and there he saw another man lying asleep.

COMMENTARY

Kālayavana saw another person.

|| 10.51.10 ||

nanv asau dūram ānīya śete mām iha sādhu-vat

iti matvācyutaṁ mūḍhas taṁ padā samatāḍayat

TRANSLATION

“So, after leading me such a long distance, now He is lying here like some saint!” Thus thinking the sleeping man to be Lord Kṛṣṇa, the deluded fool kicked him with all his strength.

|| 10.51.11 ||

sa utthāya ciraṁ suptaḥ śanair unmīlya locane

diśo vilokayan pārśve tam adrākṣīd avasthitam

TRANSLATION

The man awoke after a long sleep and slowly opened his eyes. Looking all about, he saw Kālayavana standing beside him.

|| 10.51.12 ||

sa tāvat tasya ruṣṭasya dṛṣṭi-pātena bhārata

deha-jenāgninā dagdho bhasma-sād abhavat kṣaṇāt

TRANSLATION

The awakened man was angry and cast his glance at Kālayavana, whose body burst into flames. In a single moment, O King Parīkṣit, Kālayavana was burnt to ashes.

COMMENTARY

By the angry glance from Mucukunda, Kālayavana’s body caught on fire, and then that fire generated from Kālayavana’s own body (*deha-jena-agninā*) burnt him to ashes. This was because of the boon prayed for and received by Mucukunda, which is mentioned in the *Hari-vaṁśa* as follows:

prasuptaṁ bodhayed yo māṁ taṁ daheyam ahaṁ surāḥ

cakṣuṣā krodha-dīptena evam āha punaḥ punaḥ

"Mucukunda repeatedly said, 'O demigods, may that person who wakes me from sleep be burned up by my eyes fiery with anger.'"

Mucukunda prayed for the boon of sleep because of the prediction of the ancient sage Garga who said, 'You will remain asleep, without waking until Kṛṣṇa appears.' Mucukunda thought, "It is impossible for me, longing for the sight of Kṛṣṇa, to remain awake for the many cycles of four *yugas*. Better that I sleep and then the time will pass in a few moments."

Mucukunda made this rather morbid request to scare Lord Indra. Otherwise Indra would keep waking him up to request his help in fighting various cosmic enemies. Indra's consent to Mucukunda's request is described in *Śrī Viṣṇu Purāṇa* as follows:

proktaś ca devaiḥ saṁsuptaṁ yas tvām utthāpayiṣyati

deha-jenāgninā sadyaḥ sa tu bhasmī-kariṣyati

The demigods declared, "Whoever awakens you from sleep will suddenly be burnt to ashes by a fire generated from his body."

|| 10.51.13 ||

śrī-rājovāca

ko nāma sa pumān brahman kasya kiṁ-vīrya eva ca

kasmād guhāṁ gataḥ śiṣye kiṁ-tejo yavanārdanaḥ

TRANSLATION

King Parīkṣit said: Who was that person, O brāhmaṇa? To which family did he belong, and what were his powers? Why did that destroyer of the barbarian lie down to sleep in the cave, and whose son was he?

COMMENTARY

Parīkṣit Mahārāja asked, "Whose family (*kasya*) did that destroyer of the Yavana (*yavana-ārdanaḥ*) belong to? Where did he get his power (*kiṁ-vīrya*) from? Whose son (*kim tejaḥ:tejas:semen*) was he?"

|| 10.51.14 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

sa ikṣvāku-kule jāto māndhātṛ-tanayo mahān

mucukunda iti khyāto brahmaṇyaḥ satya-saṅgaraḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Mucukunda was the name of this great personality, who was born in the Ikṣvāku dynasty as the son of Māndhātā. He was devoted to brahminical culture and always true to his vow in battle.

|| 10.51.15 ||

sa yācitaḥ sura-gaṇair indrādyair ātma-rakṣaṇe

asurebhyaḥ paritrastais tad-rakṣāṁ so 'karoc ciram

TRANSLATION

Begged by Indra and the other demigods to help protect them when they were terrorized by the demons, Mucukunda defended them for a long time.

|| 10.51.16 ||

labdhvā guhaṁ te svaḥ-pālaṁ mucukundam athābruvan

rājan viramatāṁ kṛcchrād bhavān naḥ paripālanāt

TRANSLATION

When the demigods obtained Kārttikeya as their general, they told Mucukunda, "O King, you may now give up your troublesome duty of guarding us."

COMMENTARY

When the demigods obtained Kārtikeya (*guhaṁ*) to protect them, they addressed Mucukunda.

|| 10.51.17 ||

nara-lokaṁ parityajya rājyaṁ nihata-kaṇṭakam

asmān pālayato vīra kāmās te sarva ujjhitāḥ

TRANSLATION

“Abandoning an unopposed kingdom in the world of men, O valiant one, you neglected all your personal desires while engaged in protecting us.”

|| 10.51.18 ||

sutā mahiṣyo bhavato jñātayo ’mātya-mantrinaḥ

prajāś ca tulya-kālīnā nādhunā santi kālitāḥ

TRANSLATION

“The children, queens, relatives, ministers, advisers and subjects who were your contemporaries are no longer alive. They have all been swept away by time.”

COMMENTARY

The demigods said, “Furthermore, your contemporaries have moved on by the force of time (*kālitāḥ*).”

|| 10.51.19 ||

kālo balīyān balināṁ bhagavān īśvaro ’vyayaḥ

prajāḥ kālayate krīḍan paśu-pālo yathā paśūn

TRANSLATION

“Inexhaustible time, stronger than the strong, is the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself. Like a herdsman moving his animals along, He moves mortal creatures as His pastime.”

COMMENTARY

Mucukunda asked, “Who has made them move?” This verse answers: time.

|| 10.51.20 ||

varaṁ vṛṇīṣva bhadraṁ te ṛte kaivalyam adya naḥ

eka eveśvaras tasya bhagavān viṣṇur avyayaḥ

TRANSLATION

“All good fortune to you! Now please choose a benediction from us—anything but liberation, since only the infallible Supreme Lord, Viṣṇu, can bestow that.”

COMMENTRY

Only Viṣṇu can grant that liberation (*tasya*).

|| 10.51.21 ||

evam uktaḥ sa vai devān abhivandya mahā-yaśāḥ

aśayiṣṭa guhā-viṣṭo nidrayā deva-dattayā

TRANSLATION

Addressed thus, King Mucukunda took his respectful leave of the demigods and went to a cave, where he lay down to enjoy the sleep they had granted him.

|| 10.51.22 ||

yavane bhasma-sān nīte bhagavān sātvatarṣabhaḥ

ātmānaṁ darśayām āsa mucukundāya dhīmate

TRANSLATION

After the Yavana was burnt to ashes, the Supreme Lord, chief of the Sātvatas, revealed Himself to the wise Mucukunda.

|| 10.51.23-26 ||

tam ālokya ghana-śyāmaṁ pīta-kauśeya-vāsasam

śrīvatsa-vakṣasaṁ bhrājat kaustubhena virājitam

catur-bhujaṁ rocamānaṁ vaijayantyā ca mālayā

cāru-prasanna-vadanaṁ sphuran-makara-kuṇḍalam

prekṣaṇīyaṁ nṛ-lokasya sānurāga-smitekṣaṇam

apīvya-vayasaṁ matta-mṛgendrodāra-vikramam

paryapṛcchan mahā-buddhis tejasā tasya dharṣitaḥ

śaṅkitaḥ śanakai rājā durdharṣam iva tejasā

TRANSLATION

As he gazed at the Lord, King Mucukunda saw that He was dark blue like a cloud, had four arms, and wore a yellow silk garment. On His chest He bore the Śrīvatsa mark and on His neck the brilliantly glowing Kaustubha gem. Adorned with a Vaijayantī garland, the Lord displayed His handsome, peaceful face, which attracts the eyes of all mankind with its shark-shaped earrings and affectionately smiling glance. The beauty of His youthful form was unexcelled, and He moved with the nobility of an angry lion. The highly intelligent King was overwhelmed by the Lord's effulgence, which showed Him to be invincible. Expressing his uncertainty, Mucukunda hesitantly questioned Lord Kṛṣṇa as follows.

COMMENTARY

The word *śaṅkitaḥ*, "having some doubt," indicates that Mucukunda was thinking, "Is this indeed the Supreme Lord?" The Lord was unconquerable (*durdharṣam*). *Iva* in this case is only a verbal ornament.

|| 10.51.27 ||

śrī-mucukunda uvāca

ko bhavān iha samprāpto vipine giri-gahvare

padbhyāṁ padma-palāśābhyāṁ vicarasy uru-kaṇṭake

TRANSLATION

Śrī Mucukunda said: Who are You who have come to this mountain cave in the forest, having walked on the thorny ground with feet as soft as lotus petals?

COMMENTARY

Mucukunda said, “You are walking on the thorny ground with Your tender lotus petal feet.”

|| 10.51.28 ||

kiṁ svit tejasvināṁ tejo bhagavān vā vibhāvasuḥ

sūryaḥ somo mahendro vā loka-pālo paro ’pi vā

TRANSLATION

Perhaps You are the potency of all potent beings. Or maybe You are the powerful god of fire, or the sun-god, the moon-god, the King of heaven or the ruling demigod of some other planet.

|| 10.51.29 ||

manye tvāṁ deva-devānāṁ trayāṇāṁ puruṣarṣabham

yad bādhase guhā-dhvāntaṁ pradīpaḥ prabhayā yathā

TRANSLATION

I think You are the Supreme Personality among the three chief gods, since You drive away the darkness of this cave as a lamp dispels darkness with its light.

COMMENTARY

Mucukunda said, “With Your effulgence You dispel the darkness of this mountain cave, and with Your jewel-like knowledge You destroy the darkness of ignorance in my heart.” In Sanskrit, the heart is sometimes metaphorically referred to as *guha*, “cavern,” a deep and secret place.

|| 10.51.30 ||

śuśrūṣatām avyalīkam asmākaṁ nara-puṅgava

sva-janma karma gotraṁ vā kathyatāṁ yadi rocate

TRANSLATION

O best among men, if You like, please truly describe Your birth, activities and lineage to us, who are eager to hear.

COMMENTARY

Mucukunda said, “Please tell us who want to hear.” The plural usage of the word *śuśrūṣatām*, “to us, who are sincerely eager to hear,” indicates Mucukunda’s noble position and his qualification to hear from Kṛṣṇa. Otherwise, Kṛṣṇa would not speak if He thought that Mucukunda was a low class, unqualified person.

|| 10.51.31 ||

vayaṁ tu puruṣa-vyāghra aikṣvākāḥ kṣatra-bandhavaḥ

mucukunda iti prokto yauvanāśvātmajaḥ prabho

TRANSLATION

As for ourselves, O tiger among men, we belong to a family of fallen kṣatriyas, descendants of King Ikṣvāku. My name is Mucukunda, my Lord, and I am the son of Yauvanāśva.

COMMENTARY

Though Mucukunda had indicated his own position, he noted Kṛṣṇa’s silence. Therefore he decided to introduce himself, noting his own good qualifications. By saying he was a low class *kṣatriya* (*kṣatra-bandhu*), Mucukunda intended to show his humility and thus his good quality.

|| 10.51.32 ||

cira-prajāgara-śrānto nidrayāpahatendriyaḥ

śaye 'smin vijane kāmaṁ kenāpy utthāpito 'dhunā

TRANSLATION

I was fatigued after remaining awake for a long time, and my senses were overwhelmed by sleep. Thus I slept comfortably here in this solitary place until, just now, someone woke me.

|| 10.51.33 ||

so 'pi bhasmī-kṛto nūnam ātmīyenaiva pāpmanā

anantaraṁ bhavān śrīmāû lakṣito 'mitra-śāsanaḥ

TRANSLATION

The man who woke me was burned to ashes by the reaction of his sins. Just then I saw You, possessing a glorious appearance and the power to chastise Your enemies.

COMMENTARY

Mucukunda said, "I consider You the chastiser of enemies. Through me, You destroyed that foolish barbarian."

|| 10.51.34 ||

tejasā te 'viṣahyeṇa bhūri draṣṭuṁ na śaknumaḥ

hataujasā mahā-bhāga mānanīyo 'si dehinām

TRANSLATION

Your unbearably brilliant effulgence overwhelms our strength, and thus we cannot fix our gaze upon You. O exalted one, You are to be honored by all embodied beings.

|| 10.51.35 ||

evaṁ sambhāṣito rājñā bhagavān bhūta-bhāvanaḥ

pratyāha prahasan vāṇyā megha-nāda-gabhīrayā

TRANSLATION

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Thus addressed by the King, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, origin of all creation, smiled and then replied to him in a voice as deep as the rumbling of clouds.

|| 10.51.36 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

janma-karmābhidhānāni santi me 'ṅga sahasraśaḥ

na śakyante 'nusaṅkhyātum anantatvān mayāpi hi

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord said: My dear friend, I have taken thousands of births, lived thousands of lives and accepted thousands of names. In fact My births, activities and names are limitless, and thus even I cannot count them.

COMMENTARY

"Though Mucukunda is completely devoid of pride, he showed his position in order to hear My words. Therefore, although I am also prideless, I will now pronounce My own superiority in accordance with My words: 'As they surrender to Me, I reward them accordingly.'" Thinking thus, Kṛṣṇa spoke this verse.

|| 10.51.37 ||

kvacid rajāṁsi vimame pārthivāny uru-janmabhiḥ

guṇa-karmābhidhānāni na me janmāni karhicit

TRANSLATION

After many lifetimes someone might count the dust particles on the earth, but no one can ever finish counting My qualities, activities, names and births.

COMMENTARY

Someone may count (*vimame*) all the particles of dust on the earth.

|| 10.51.38 ||

kāla-trayopapannāni janma-karmāṇi me nṛpa

anukramanto naivāntaṁ gacchanti paramarṣayaḥ

TRANSLATION

O King, the greatest sages enumerate My births and activities, which take place throughout the three phases of time, but never do they reach the end of them.

|| 10.51.39-40 ||

tathāpy adyatanāny aṅga śṛnuṣva gadato mama

vijñāpito viriñcena purāhaṁ dharma-guptaye

bhūmer bhārāyamāṇānām asurāṇāṁ kṣayāya ca

avatīrṇo yadu-kule gṛha ānakadundubheḥ

vadanti vāsudeveti vasudeva-sutaṁ hi mām

TRANSLATION

Nonetheless, O friend, I will tell you about My current birth, name and activities. Kindly hear. Some time ago, Lord Brahmā requested Me to protect religious principles and destroy the demons who were burdening the earth. Thus I descended in the Yadu dynasty, in the home of Ānakadundubhi. Indeed, because I am the son of Vasudeva, people call Me Vāsudeva.

|| 10.51.41 ||

kālanemir hataḥ kaṁsaḥ pralambādyāś ca sad-dviṣaḥ

ayaṁ ca yavano dagdho rājaṁs te tigma-cakṣuṣā

TRANSLATION

I have killed Kālanemi, reborn as Kaṁsa, as well as Pralamba and other enemies of the pious. And now, O King, this barbarian has been burnt to ashes by your piercing glance.

|| 10.51.42 ||

so ’haṁ tavānugrahārthaṁ guhām etām upāgataḥ

prārthitaḥ pracuraṁ pūrvaṁ tvayāhaṁ bhakta-vatsalaḥ

TRANSLATION

Since in the past you repeatedly prayed to Me, I have personally come to this cave to show you mercy, for I am affectionately inclined to My devotees.

|| 10.51.43 ||

varān vṛṇīṣva rājarṣe sarvān kāmān dadāmi te

māṁ prasanno janaḥ kaścin na bhūyo ’rhati śocitum

TRANSLATION

Now choose some benedictions from Me, O saintly King. I will fulfill all your desires. One who has satisfied Me need never again lament.

COMMENTARY

We lament when we feel incomplete, when we have lost something or when we fail to achieve something desirable. In this verse Kṛṣṇa reassures his devotee, “The person who has satisfied Me does not have to lament. The benedictions given by others are perishable, and therefore the benefactor laments when the boon disappears. But for one who surrenders to Me, I give benedictions which are imperishable, and therefore he need not lament.”

|| 10.51.44 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

ity uktas taṁ praṇamyāha mucukundo mudānvitaḥ

jñātvā nārāyaṇaṁ devaṁ garga-vākyam anusmaran

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Mucukunda bowed down to the Lord when he heard this. Remembering the words of the sage Garga, he joyfully recognized Kṛṣṇa to be the Supreme Lord, Nārāyaṇa. The King then addressed Him as follows.

COMMENTARY

Remembering the words of the ancient sage Garga, "In the twenty-eighth millennium Kṛṣṇa will appear and become visible to you," Mucukunda recognized Kṛṣṇa, bowed to Him and spoke.

|| 10.51.45 ||

śrī-mucukunda uvāca

vimohito 'yaṁ jana īśa māyayā tvadīyayā tvāṁ na bhajaty anartha-dṛk

sukhāya duḥkha-prabhaveṣu sajjate gṛheṣu yoṣit puruṣaś ca vañcitaḥ

TRANSLATION

Śrī Mucukunda said: O Lord, the people of this world, both men and women, are bewildered by Your illusory energy. Unaware of their real benefit, they do not worship You but instead seek happiness by entangling themselves in family affairs, which are actually sources of misery.

COMMENTARY

That a person rejects Your devotional service and instead accepts the objects of lust is the power of Your *māyā*. Mucukunda expresses this idea here. Mucukunda said, "Both men and women, bewildered by Your *māyā*, become cheated and engage in family life."

|| 10.51.46 ||

labdhvā jano durlabham atra mānuṣaṁ kathañcid avyaṅgam ayatnato 'nagha

pādāravindaṁ na bhajaty asan-matir gṛhāndha-kūpe patito yathā paśuḥ

TRANSLATION

That person has an impure mind who, despite having somehow or other automatically obtained the rare and highly evolved human form of life, does not

worship Your lotus feet. Like an animal that has fallen into a blind well, such a person has fallen into the darkness of a material home.

COMMENTARY

Just see how an unintelligent fool sells a touchstone for a few pennies. That is the essence of this verse.

Mucukunda said, “Furthermore, material sense gratification is obtainable even among the hogs and beasts. Worship of the Supreme Lord, however, can only be attained in a human birth. Thus, if after obtaining the human form of life one fails to worship You, he is most foolish. Here in this field of fruitive work man has a highly evolved form of body (*avyaṅgam*). But if his mentality is absorbed in temporary sense pleasures and he is fallen into the blind well of household life, he is no better than an animal that falls into a blind well due to his greed for grass.”

|| 10.51.47 ||

mamaiṣa kālo ’jita niṣphalo gato rājya-śriyonnaddha-madasya bhū-pateḥ

martyātma-buddheḥ suta-dāra-kośa-bhūṣv āsajjamānasya duranta-cintayā

TRANSLATION

I have wasted all this time, O unconquerable one, becoming more and more intoxicated by my domain and opulence as an earthly king. Misidentifying the mortal body as the self, becoming attached to children, wives, treasury and land, I suffered endless anxiety.

COMMENTARY

Mucukunda said, “That person whom I am condemning is actually myself. I think of the mortal body as the self (*martyātma-buddheḥ*).”

|| 10.51.48 ||

kalevare ’smin ghaṭa-kuḍya-sannibhe nirūḍha-māno nara-deva ity aham

vṛto rathebhāśva-padāty-anīkapair gāṁ paryaṭaṁs tvāgaṇayan su-durmadaḥ

TRANSLATION

With deep arrogance I took myself to be the body, which is a material object like a pot or a wall. Thinking myself a god among men, I traveled the earth surrounded by my charioteers, elephants, cavalry, foot soldiers and generals, disregarding You in my deluding pride.

COMMENTARY

Mucukunda said, “Due to identifying with this body, which is like a pot or wall (*kuḍya*), I have become badly intoxicated. I was very attached to material things, and thus I wasted all my time uselessly.”

|| 10.51.49 ||

pramattam uccair itikṛtya-cintayā pravṛddha-lobhaṁ viṣayeṣu lālasam

tvam apramattaḥ sahasābhipadyase kṣul-lelihāno ’hir ivākhum antakaḥ

TRANSLATION

A man obsessed with thoughts of what he thinks needs to be done, intensely greedy, and delighting in sense enjoyment is suddenly confronted by You, who are ever alert. Like a hungry snake licking its fangs before a mouse, You appear before him as death.

COMMENTARY

In the form of time You devour those who do not worship You. That is the meaning of this verse.

Mucukunda said, “Because of attachment to sense gratification, one becomes thoroughly deluded and inattentive (*pramattam*), and thus ignores You. Thinking that he must do certain actions in the world, one develops ever-increasing greed. Even though his desires are frustrated, he is still eager for those objects. You remain fully attentive (*apramattaḥ*) as time however, and confront that person as death (*antakaḥ*) to take away everything. As time You act just like a snake, licking its fangs out of hunger before overcoming a mouse.”

|| 10.51.50 ||

purā rathair hema-pariṣkṛtaiś caran mataṁ-gajair vā nara-deva-saṁjñitaḥ

sa eva kālena duratyayena te kalevaro viṭ-kṛmi-bhasma-saṁjñitaḥ

TRANSLATION

The body that at first rides high on fierce elephants or chariots adorned with gold and is known by the name “king” is later, by Your invincible power of time, called “feces,” “worms,” or “ashes.”

COMMENTARY

This verse describes how time seizes the body. Although one may be a famous king wandering about on a chariot or an elephant, he is eventually devoured by unavoidable death, and then takes the disgusting form of stool, worms or ashes.

|| 10.51.51 ||

nirjitya dik-cakram abhūta-vigraho varāsana-sthaḥ sama-rāja-vanditaḥ

gṛheṣu maithunya-sukheṣu yoṣitāṁ krīḍā-mṛgaḥ pūruṣa īśa nīyate

TRANSLATION

Having conquered the entire circle of directions and being thus free of conflict, a man sits on a splendid throne, receiving praise from leaders who were once his equals. But when he enters the women’s chambers, where sex pleasure is found, he is led about like a pet animal, O Lord.

COMMENTARY

The previous verse stated that a person who achieves kingly status among his peers ends up as stool and worms by the force of time at the end of his life. This verse describes that even while living a king becomes a mere plaything in the hands of women. Having conquered his enemies, the king is worshiped by those who were once his equals. But in the private chambers of the Queen, he is made to move about like a pet animal for sexual pleasure.

|| 10.51.52 ||

karoti karmāṇi tapaḥ-suniṣṭhito nivṛtta-bhogas tad-apekṣayādadat

punaś ca bhūyāsam ahaṁ sva-rāḍ iti pravṛddha-tarṣo na sukhāya kalpate

TRANSLATION

A king who desires even greater power than he already has strictly performs his duties, carefully practicing austerity and forgoing sense enjoyment. But he whose urges are so rampant, thinking "I am independent and supreme," cannot attain happiness.

COMMENTARY

The man who does not worship the Lord is condemned for his enjoyment of worldly pleasures. But the same man is also condemned even when he does not have sense gratification, as stated in this verse. Such a man is fixed in austerities such as sleeping on the ground and observing celibacy with the urge to become an even more powerful king, or even Indra himself.

|| 10.51.53 ||

bhavāpavargo bhramato yadā bhavej janasya tarhy acyuta sat-samāgamaḥ

sat-saṅgamo yarhi tadaiva sad-gatau parāvareśe tvayi jāyate matiḥ

TRANSLATION

When the material life of a wandering soul has ceased, O Acyuta, he may attain the association of Your devotees. And when he associates with them, there awakens in him devotion unto You, who are the goal of the devotees and the Lord of all causes and their effects.

COMMENTARY

It may be questioned, "When will *bhakti*, which destroys all suffering and bestows all bliss, appear? This question is answered in this verse."

Mucukunda said, "O Acyuta, when a wandering spirit soul's bondage in material existence is destroyed (*bhavāpavargaḥ*), he gets the association of merciful *sādhus* (*sat-saṇgamaḥ*)."

The word *tadaiva* means then and only then. In this verse "when" (*yarhi*) and "then" (*tadā*) are spoken in regard to a broad conception of time. In a more accurate description of time, it would be more proper to say that saintly association comes first and cessation of material existence comes afterwards, since they are respectively the

cause and the effect (*kāraṇa-kāryayoḥ*). However, because the effect happens so quickly, the effect is mentioned before the cause to emphasize the quickness. This is an example of the fourth type of extreme statement known as *atiśayokti*. A statement in which the logical order of a cause and its effect is reversed should be understood as *atiśayokti*, emphasis by extreme assertion.

The *Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇi* explains the word *sad gatau* (goal of the saintly): "In Him whose shelter are the devotees. This is shown in such phrases as *svecchā-mayasya*, I am subordinate to My devotees." (SB 10.14.2) Actually everything Kṛṣṇa does is initiated by the desire of His devotees. Therefore His mercy is also dependent on the saintly devotees. In the phrase *sad-gatau*, it is implied that Kṛṣṇa is not the *gati* (goal) of those who are *asat* (temporary materialists). This means that Kṛṣṇa's mercy can be received only when a succession of predecessor saints has been established. It did not arise all by itself some time in the past. This point is confirmed in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 10.2.31:

svayaṁ samuttīrya sudustaraṁ dyuman

bhavārṇavaṁ bhīmam adabhra-sauhṛdāḥ

bhavat-padāmbhoruha-nāvam atra te

nidhāya yātāḥ sad-anugraho bhavān

"O Lord, who resemble the shining sun, You are always ready to fulfill the desire of Your devotee, and therefore You are known as a desire tree [*vāñchā-kalpataru*]. When *ācāryas* completely take shelter under Your lotus feet in order to cross the fierce ocean of nescience, they leave behind on earth the method by which they cross, and because You are very merciful to Your other devotees, You accept this method to help them."

|| 10.51.54 ||

manye mamānugraha īśa te kṛto

rājyānubandhāpagamo yadṛcchayā

yaḥ prārthyate sādhubhir eka-caryayā

vanaṁ vivikṣadbhir akhaṇḍa-bhūmi-paiḥ

TRANSLATION

My Lord, I think You have shown me mercy, since my attachment to my kingdom has spontaneously ceased. Such freedom is prayed for by saintly rulers of vast empires who desire to enter the forest for a life of solitude.

COMMENTARY

Mucukunda said, "That I unexpectedly gave up attachment to my kingdom and other things after association with Your devotees is certainly Your mercy." This is expressed in this verse.

Vṛtrāsura said:

> *trai-vargikāyāsa-vighātam asmat-patir vidhatte puruṣasya śakra*
>
> *tato 'numeyo bhagavat-prasādo yo durlabho 'kiñcana-gocaro 'nyaiḥ*

> "O Indra, my master the Lord destroys all attempts at *dharma, artha* and *kāma* (religion, economic development and sense gratification) for His devotees. By that one can infer His mercy. Such mercy is only available to the selfless devotees of the Lord. It cannot be attained by those attached to material energy." (SB 6.11.23)

Mucukunda prayed, "Saintly kings pray for the severing of attachment to family and kingdom. When it happens they travel alone for the sake of achieving devotional service in the form of uninterrupted meditation upon You."

|| 10.51.55 ||

na kāmaye 'nyaṁ tava pāda-sevanād akiñcana-prārthyatamād varaṁ vibho

ārādhya kas tvāṁ hy apavarga-daṁ hare vṛṇīta āryo varam ātma-bandhanam

TRANSLATION

O all-powerful one, I desire no boon other than service to Your lotus feet, the boon most eagerly sought by those free of material desire. O Hari, what enlightened person who worships You, the giver of liberation, would choose a boon that causes his own bondage?

COMMENTARY

Here Mucukunda replies to Kṛṣṇa's offer to accept a benediction: "Those who want nothing material (*akiñcana*) pray for *bhakti*. But more worthy of prayer is *prema*, and the most worthy of prayer is the service of Your lotus feet. Thus I do not want liberation, what to speak of any other boon."

The phrase *apavarga-daṁ* means the bestower of *bhakti-yoga*, since devotion is referred to by the term *apavarga* in the Fifth Canto. Mucukunda said, "What discriminating person would chose some ordinary material benediction leading to his own bondage, even if You were willing to grant it? I, however, am not interested even in liberation, so why would I choose such a thing?"

A second meaning: "Even one who worships You to get liberation, if he is intelligent, would he accept Your boons which create bondage to the world again? What to speak then of Your devotee?"

|| 10.51.56 ||

tasmād visṛjyāśiṣa īśa sarvato

rajas-tamaḥ-sattva-guṇānubandhanāḥ

nirañjanaṁ nirguṇam advayaṁ paraṁ

tvāṁ jñāpti-mātraṁ puruṣaṁ vrajāmy aham

TRANSLATION

Therefore, O Lord, having put aside all objects of material desire, which are bound to the modes of passion, ignorance and goodness, I am approaching You, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, for shelter. You are not covered by mundane designations; rather, You are the Supreme Absolute Truth, full in pure knowledge and transcendental to the material modes.

COMMENTARY

Mucukunda makes it clear in this verse that he himself has no desire for anything material.

Mucukunda said, "I do not want any (*sarvataḥ*) of the fruits connected with the modes of passion, ignorance and goodness. I reject even liberation, which is mixed up with the

mode of goodness because it is based on knowledge. I pray only for the service of Your lotus feet, which is transcendental to all the modes. It is said in the eleventh chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā* that devotional service is beyond the three modes. Therefore, I am approaching (*vrajāmi*) You, the Supreme Person."

Kṛṣṇa replied, "But some say that My form as a person is Brahman covered by *māyā*."

Mucukunda said, "No, You are without any material coverings (*nirañjanam*) and completely transcendental to the material modes (*nirguna*)!"

Kṛṣṇa: "Yes, I may be without *guṇas*. But some people say that My present body is made of the *guṇas*."

Mucukunda: "You and Your body are not different (*advayam*); rather Your body is You."

Kṛṣṇa: "Then what is the real identity of My body?"

Mucukunda: "It is made of pure knowledge (*cit-svarūpa:jñāpti-mātram*)."

Another meaning: "Because the world is made of Your energy it is nondifferent from You, and in that sense You are *advayam*. By Your internal energy (*svarūpa-śakti*) You exist in a transcendental body of pure knowledge (*jñāpti-mātram*)"

|| 10.51.57 ||

ciram iha vṛjinārtas tapyamāno 'nutāpair

avitṛṣa-ṣaḍ-amitro 'labdha-śāntiḥ kathañcit

śaraṇa-da samupetas tvat-padābjaṁ parātman

abhayam ṛtam aśokaṁ pāhi māpannam īśa

TRANSLATION

For so long I have been pained by troubles in this world and have been burning with lamentation. My six enemies are never satiated, and I can find no peace. Therefore, O giver of shelter, O Supreme Soul, please protect me. O Lord, in the midst of danger I have by good fortune approached Your lotus feet, which are the truth and which thus make one fearless and free of sorrow.

COMMENTARY

“Go ahead and enjoy sense gratification, and when that is finished I will personally give You the service of My feet.”

Fearing such enticement from Kṛṣṇa, Mucukunda clasps the Lord’s feet and offers this prayer: “I have been pained by such disturbances as the eagerness of inimical opponents who wanted to defeat me in battle. Hari! Hari! I am burning with repentance. For all this time I have not worshiped You. There is no cessation of the desire for enjoyment of the six senses of eye, ear, nose, tongue, skin and mind. Neither do I find any peace by my own intelligence nor by the knowledge given by others. If sense gratification is given to me, even if You give it, I will again become entangled like this, because that is the nature of material enjoyment. Therefore do not give that enjoyment!”

“O Supersoul, who resides in everyone and therefore knows everything. I have taken shelter of Your lotus feet. The fear of enemies and disease come along with winning the treasures of the earth. The treasures of heaven include impermanence, and the treasure of merging in Brahman cheats one of the service of Your lotus feet. The treasure of Your feet, however, awards fearlessness, freedom from lamentation and eternal life in Your loving service. Therefore please protect me, who am afflicted with calamity, and keep me sheltered at Your lotus feet.”

|| 10.51.58 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

sārvabhauma mahā-rāja matis te vimalorjitā

varaiḥ pralobhitasyāpi na kāmair vihatā yataḥ

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord said: O emperor, great ruler, your mind is pure and potent. Though I enticed You with benedictions, your mind was not overcome by material desires.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “Your intelligence is strong (*ūrjitā*), not moving here and there.”

|| 10.51.59 ||

pralobhito varair yat tvam apramādāya viddhi tat

na dhīr ekānta-bhaktānām āśīrbhir bhidyate kvacit

TRANSLATION

Understand that I enticed you with benedictions just to prove that you would not be deceived. The intelligence of My unalloyed devotees is never diverted by material blessings.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “Know that by offering you benedictions, I am showing other worshipers how you will not be bewildered (*apramādāya*) by such things.” Or another meaning is: “You will not be distracted because the intelligence of My devotee is never attracted to material enjoyment.”

|| 10.51.60 ||

yuñjānānām abhaktānāṁ prāṇāyāmādibhir manaḥ

akṣīṇa-vāsanaṁ rājan dṛśyate punar utthitam

TRANSLATION

The minds of nondevotees who engage in such practices as prāṇāyama are not fully cleansed of material desires. Thus, O King, material desires are again seen to arise in their minds.

COMMENTARY

Those who worship other objects are attracted to material enjoy-ment. That is illustrated in this verse. For the nondevotee *jñānīs* and *yogīs* practicing *prāṇāyama*, *sama* and *dama* attraction to material enjoyment awakens (*utthitam*) again.

|| 10.51.61 ||

vicarasva mahīṁ kāmaṁ mayy āveśita-mānasaḥ

astv evaṁ nityadā tubhyaṁ bhaktir mayy anapāyinī

TRANSLATION

Wander this earth at will, with your mind fixed on Me. May you always possess such unfailing devotion for Me.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “I have already given you pure *bhakti*, but today I am giving it to you again.”

|| 10.51.62 ||

kṣātra-dharma-sthito jantūn nyavadhīr mṛgayādibhiḥ

samāhitas tat tapasā jahy aghaṁ mad-upāśritaḥ

TRANSLATION

Because you followed the principles of a kṣatriya, you killed living beings while hunting and performing other duties. You must vanquish the sins thus incurred by carefully executing penances while remaining surrendered to Me.

COMMENTARY

Mucukunda thought, “Alas, alas, Kṛṣṇa wants to separate me from His association from now on. This can’t be! It just can’t be!”

Noticing Mucukunda’s great anxiety, Kṛṣṇa then thought as follows: “In this incarnation, he should not associate with Me directly. All the personal assistants in My pastimes have taken birth in Dvāpara-yuga such as Uddhava, Akrūra, Arjuna and Yudhiṣṭhira. Mucukunda, however, is extremely old having taken birth at the very beginning of this *manvantara*. When people see him they will laugh and say, ‘Aha, who is this very tall and stout man who is such a poor match for the Lord?’

“Even now, during the pastime of fleeing from Jarāsandha, as well as in later pastimes such as the kidnapping of Rukmiṇī, it will not be at all fitting for this person to be associated with Me while I am fighting the likes of Śālva and others. He will take these opponents of Mine and crush them in hands like mosquitoes. What excuse can I make up, therefore, to separate him from My association?”

After thinking like this, Kṛṣṇa decided that the only means to accomplish this would be to speak some false words in order to mislead Mucukunda. Thus He spoke this verse.

|| 10.51.63 ||

janmany anantare rājan sarva-bhūta-suhṛttamaḥ

bhūtvā dvija-varas tvaṁ vai mām upaiṣyasi kevalam

TRANSLATION

O King, in your very next life you will become an excellent brāhmaṇa, the greatest well-wisher of all creatures, and certainly come to Me alone.

COMMENTARY

Mucukunda asks, “When will I become Your associate?”

Kṛṣṇa answers in this verse. “After leaving this body you will go to My abode in Vaikuṇṭha. I give liberation and also residence in Vaikuṇṭha even to My enemies in this incarnation, so what then to speak of an exalted devotee like you? In My pastimes in a future incarnation (*janmany anantare*) you will associate with Me as an essential participant. In your very next birth you will be the best friend of all living entities (*sarva-bhūta-suhṛttamaḥ*). At that time you and I will act for their benefit by giving them transcendental knowledge as suits the circumstances. Becoming a universally respected and learned *brāhmaṇa* (*dvija-vara*), you will attain Me alone due to your lack of possessiveness and mood of renunciation. In other words, you will remain in My association.”

Thus ends the commentary on the Fifty First Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Fifty-two

Rukmiṇī's Message to Lord Kṛṣṇa

|| 10.52.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

itthaṁ so 'nagrahīto 'nga kṛṣṇenekṣvāku nandanaḥ

taṁ parikramya sannamya niścakrāma guhā-mukhāt

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: My dear King, thus graced by Lord Kṛṣṇa, Mucukunda circumambulated Him and bowed down to Him. Then Mucukunda, the beloved descendant of Ikṣvāku, exited through the mouth of the cave.

COMMENTARY

This chapter describes how Kṛṣṇa became invisible to His enemies, caused a mountain to be burned and went to Dvārakā. Kṛṣṇa then heard the message of Rukmiṇī from the mouth of a *brāhmaṇa* and accepted her as His wife.

|| 10.52.2 ||

saṁvīkṣya kṣullakān martyān paśūn vīrud-vanaspatīn

matvā kali-yugaṁ prāptaṁ jagāma diśam uttarām

TRANSLATION

Seeing that the size of all the human beings, animals, trees and plants was severely reduced, and thus realizing that the age of Kali was at hand, Mucukunda left for the north.

COMMENTARY

Seeing that Kali-yuga had almost arrived (*kali-yugaṁ prāptaṁ*), Mucukunda departed for the North.

|| 10.52.3 ||

tapaḥ-śraddhā-yuto dhīro niḥsaṅgo mukta-saṁśayaḥ

samādhāya manaḥ kṛṣṇe prāviśad gandhamādanam

TRANSLATION

The sober King, beyond material association and free of doubt, was convinced of the value of austerity. Absorbing his mind in Lord Kṛṣṇa, he came to Gandhamādana Mountain.

|| 10.52.4 ||

badary-āśramam āsādya nara-nārāyaṇālayam

sarva-dvandva-sahaḥ śāntas tapasārādhayad dharim

TRANSLATION

There he arrived at Badarikāśrama, the abode of Lord Nara-Nārāyaṇa, where, remaining tolerant of all dualities, he peacefully worshiped the Supreme Lord Hari by performing severe austerities.

|| 10.52.5 ||

bhagavān punar āvrajya purīṁ yavana-veṣṭitām

hatvā mleccha-balaṁ ninye tadīyaṁ dvārakāṁ dhanam

TRANSLATION

The Lord returned to Mathurā, which was still surrounded by Yavanas. Then He destroyed the army of barbarians and began taking their valuables to Dvārakā.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa annihilated the enemy army, and then took (*ninye*) the booty to Dvārakā.

|| 10.52.6 ||

nīyamāne dhane gobhir nṛbhiś cācyuta-coditaiḥ

ājagāma jarāsandhas trayo-viṁśaty-anīka-paḥ

TRANSLATION

As the wealth was being carried by oxen and men under Lord Kṛṣṇa's direction, Jarāsandha appeared at the head of twenty-three armies.

|| 10.52.7 ||

vilokya vega-rabhasaṁ ripu-sainyasya mādhavau

manuṣya-ceṣṭām āpannau rājan dudruvatur drutam

TRANSLATION

O King, seeing the fierce waves of the enemy's army, the two Mādhavas, imitating human behavior, ran swiftly away.

COMMENTARY

Behaving like human beings, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma quickly fled upon seeing the great speed (*vega rabhasaṁ*) of the advancing enemy troops.

|| 10.52.8 ||

vihāya vittaṁ pracuram abhītau bhīru-bhīta-vat

padbhyāṁ palāśābhyāṁ celatur bahu-yojanam

TRANSLATION

Abandoning the abundant riches, fearless but feigning fear, They went many yojanas on Their lotuslike feet.

COMMENTARY

This verse describes the nature of Their "assuming the behavior of humans" (*manuṣya-ceṣṭām āpannau*). This is not the ultimate *siddhānta* of Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma's fleeing. Even though They exhibit human behavior, in many instances They exhibit Their omniscience and omnipotence. Neither can the explanation be given that this was some immature display due to prema, since none of Their loving devotees were present there. Nor can it be explained that Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were simply pretending to be afraid. Śrī Uddhava describes the inconceivable nature of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavataṁ* (SB 3.4.16):

karmāṇy anīhasya bhavo 'bhāvasya te

durgāśrayo 'thāri-bhayāt palāyanam

kālātmano yat pramadā-yutāśramaḥ

svātman-rateḥ khidyati dhīr vidām iha

> "Although the Supreme Personality of Godhead has nothing to do, He nevertheless acts; although He is always unborn, He nevertheless takes birth; although He is time, fearful to everyone, He flees Mathurā in fear of His enemy to take shelter in a fort; and although He is self-sufficient, He marries 16,000 women."

Though situated in fearlessness (*abhītau*), Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma decided to show fear by acting like fearful persons (*bhīru bhītavat*). This expresses a contradiction.

|| 10.52.9 ||

palāyamānau tau dṛṣṭvā māgadhaḥ prahasan balī

anvadhāvad rathānīkair īśayor apramāṇa-vit

TRANSLATION

When he saw Them fleeing, powerful Jarāsandha laughed loudly and then pursued Them with charioteers and foot soldiers. He could not understand the exalted position of the two Lords.

COMMENTARY

Jarāsandha was unaware of Their greatness (*apramāṇa-vit*), so he foolishly pursued Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma.

|| 10.52.10 ||

pradrutya dūraṁ saṁśrāntau tuṅgam āruhatāṁ girim

pravarṣaṇākhyaṁ bhagavān nityadā yatra varṣati

TRANSLATION

Apparently exhausted after fleeing a long distance, the two Lords climbed a high mountain named Pravarṣaṇa, upon which Lord Indra showers incessant rain.

|| 10.52.11 ||

girau nilīnāv ājñāya nādhigamya padaṁ nṛpa

dadāha girim edhobhiḥ samantād agnim utsṛjan

TRANSLATION

Although he knew They were hiding on the mountain, Jarāsandha could find no trace of Them. Therefore, O King, he placed firewood on all sides and set the mountain ablaze.

|| 10.52.12 ||

tata utpatya tarasā dahyamāna-taṭād ubhau

daśaika-yojanāt tuṅgān nipetatur adho bhuvi

TRANSLATION

The two of Them then suddenly jumped from the burning mountain, which was eleven yojanas high, and fell to the ground.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma jumped off a mountain (*tataḥ*), which was eleven *yojanas* (88 miles) high, and landed at a distant place beyond the location of Jarāsandha's troops.

|| 10.52.13 ||

alakṣyamāṇau ripuṇā sānugena yadūttamau

sva-puraṁ punar āyātau samudra-parikhāṁ nṛpa

TRANSLATION

Unseen by Their opponent or his followers, O King, those two most exalted Yadus returned to Their city of Dvārakā, which had the ocean as a protective moat.

|| 10.52.14 ||

so 'pi dagdhāv iti mṛṣā manvāno bala-keśavau

balam ākṛṣya su-mahan magadhān māgadho yayau

TRANSLATION

Jarāsandha, moreover, mistakenly thought that Balarāma and Keśava had burned to death in the fire. Thus he withdrew his vast military force and returned to the Magadha kingdom.

|| 10.52.15 ||

ānartādhipatiḥ śrīmān raivato raivatīṁ sutām

brahmaṇā coditaḥ prādād balāyeti puroditam

TRANSLATION

As ordered by Lord Brahmā, Raivata, the opulent ruler of Ānarta, gave Lord Balarāma his daughter Raivatī in marriage. This has already been discussed.

COMMENTARY

Before describing Kṛṣṇa's marriage, a brief mention is made of Baladeva's marriage to Revatī, the daughter of Raivata or Kakudmī. This marriage was alluded to in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 9.3.33-36.

|| 10.52.16-17 ||

bhagavān api govinda upayeme kurūdvaha

vaidarbhīṁ bhīṣmaka-sutāṁ śriyo mātrāṁ svayaṁ-vare

pramathya tarasā rājñaḥ śālvādīṁś caidya-pakṣa-gān

paśyatāṁ sarva-lokānāṁ tārkṣya-putraḥ sudhām iva

TRANSLATION

O hero among the Kurus, the Supreme Lord Himself, Govinda, married Bhīṣmaka's daughter, Vaidarbhī, who was a direct expansion of the goddess of fortune. The Lord did this by her desire, and in the process He beat down Śālva and other kings who took Śiśupāla's side. Indeed, as everyone watched, Śrī Kṛṣṇa took Rukmiṇī just as Garuḍa boldly stole nectar from the demigods.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa married Rukmiṇī, whose subtle, essential and original form (*mātrāṁ:sūkṣma-svarūpam*) is Lakṣmī (*śriyaḥ*), just as sound is the subtle quality of ether (*tan mātra*). Since Kṛṣṇa is *svayam bhagavān*, the original Personality of Godhead, it is only fitting that He married Rukmiṇī, the original goddess of fortune.

|| 10.52.18 ||

śrī-rājovāca

bhagavān bhīṣmaka-sutāṁ rukmiṇīṁ rucirānanām

rākṣasena vidhānena upayema iti śrutam

TRANSLATION

King Parīkṣit said: The Supreme Lord married Rukmiṇī, the beautiful-faced daughter of Bhīṣmaka, in the Rākṣasa style—or so I have heard.

COMMENTARY

The *Smṛti* says: *rākṣaso yuddha-haraṇāt*, "A Rākṣasa marriage takes place when the bride is stolen from one's rival suitors by force." Similarly, Śukadeva Gosvāmī himself has already said, *rājñaḥ pramathya:* Kṛṣṇa forcefully subdued the opposing kings to kidnap Rukmiṇī (verse 17).

|| 10.52.19 ||

bhagavan śrotum icchāmi kṛṣṇasyāmita-tejasaḥ

yathā māgadha-śālvādīn jitvā kanyām upāharat

TRANSLATION

My lord, I wish to hear how the immeasurably powerful Lord Kṛṣṇa took away His bride while defeating such kings as Māgadha and Sālva.

|| 10.52.20 ||

brahman kṛṣṇa-kathāḥ puṇyā mādhvīr loka-malāpahāḥ

ko nu tṛpyeta śṛṇvānaḥ śruta-jño nitya-nūtanāḥ

TRANSLATION

What experienced listener, O brāhmaṇa, could ever grow satiated while listening to the pious, charming and ever-fresh topics of Lord Kṛṣṇa, which cleanse away the world's contamination?

COMMENTARY

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said, "Who could be satiated hearing (*śṛṇvāna*) the sweet (*mādhvi:madhurāḥ*) topics of Kṛṣṇa?"

|| 10.52.21 ||

śrī-bādarāyaṇir uvāca

rājāsīd bhīṣmako nāma vidarbhādhipatir mahān

tasya pancābhavan putrāḥ kanyaikā ca varānanā

TRANSLATION

Śrī Bādarāyaṇi said: There was a king named Bhīṣmaka, the powerful ruler of Vidarbha. He had five sons and one daughter of lovely countenance.

|| 10.52.22 ||

rukmy agrajo rukmaratho rukmabāhur anantaraḥ

rukmakeśo rukmamālī rukmiṇy eṣā svasā satī

TRANSLATION

Rukmī was the first-born son, followed by Rukmaratha, Rukmabāhu, Rukmakeśa and Rukmamālī. Their sister was the exalted Rukmiṇī.

|| 10.52.23 ||

sopaśrutya mukundasya rūpa-vīrya-guṇa-śriyaḥ

gṛhāgatair gīyamānās taṁ mene sadṛśaṁ patim

TRANSLATION

Hearing of the beauty, prowess, transcendental character and opulence of Mukunda from visitors to the palace who sang His praises, Rukmiṇī decided that He would be the perfect husband for her.

|| 10.52.24 ||

tāṁ buddhi-lakṣaṇaudārya-rūpa-śīla-guṇāśrayām

kṛṣṇaś ca sadṛśīṁ bhāryāṁ samudvoḍhuṁ mano dadhe

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa knew that Rukmiṇī possessed intelligence, auspicious bodily markings, beauty, proper behavior and all other good qualities. Concluding that she would be an ideal wife for Him, He made up His mind to marry her.

|| 10.52.25 ||

bandhūnām icchatāṁ dātuṁ kṛṣṇāya bhaginīṁ nṛpa

tato nivārya kṛṣṇa-dviḍ rukmī caidyam amanyata

TRANSLATION

Because Rukmī envied the Lord, O King, he forbade his family members to give his sister to Kṛṣṇa, although they wanted to. Instead, Rukmī decided to give Rukmiṇī to Śiśupāla.

COMMENTARY

Rukmī disregarded his parents and other relatives, who wanted to give his sister Rukmiṇī to Kṛṣṇa in marriage. He took it upon himself to prevent her from marrying Kṛṣṇa by giving her to Śiśupāla instead.

|| 10.52.26 ||

tad avetyāsitāpāṅgī vaidarbhī durmanā bhṛśam

vicintyāptaṁ dvijaṁ kañcit kṛṣṇāya prāhiṇod drutam

TRANSLATION

Dark-eyed Vaidarbhī was aware of this plan, and it deeply upset her. Analyzing the situation, she quickly sent a trustworthy brāhmaṇa to Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

Rukmiṇī sent a *brāhmaṇa* to bring Kṛṣṇa there.

|| 10.52.27 ||

dvārakāṁ sa samabhyetya pratīhāraiḥ praveśitaḥ

apaśyad ādyaṁ puruṣam āsīnaṁ kāñcanāsane

TRANSLATION

Upon reaching Dvārakā, the brāhmaṇa was brought inside by the gatekeepers and saw the primeval Personality of Godhead sitting on a golden throne.

COMMENTARY

The gatekeepers (*pratīhāraiḥ*) brought the brāhmaṇa inside the palace.

|| 10.52.28 ||

dṛṣṭvā brahmaṇya-devas tam avaruhya nijāsanāt

upaveśyārhayāṁ cakre yathātmānaṁ divaukasaḥ

TRANSLATION

Seeing the brāhmaṇa, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Lord of the brāhmaṇas, came down from His throne and seated him. Then the Lord worshiped him just as He Himself is worshiped by the demigods.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa worshiped the *brāhmaṇa* just as the demigods worship Him (*ātmānaṁ:svam*).

|| 10.52.29 ||

taṁ bhuktavantaṁ viśrāntam upagamya satāṁ gatiḥ

pāṇinābhimṛśan pādāv avyagras tam apṛcchata

TRANSLATION

After the brāhmaṇa had eaten and rested, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the goal of saintly devotees, came forward, and while massaging the brāhmaṇa's feet with His own hands, He patiently questioned him as follows.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa appeared calm (*avyagraḥ*), though He was anxious over the marriage. While massaging (*abhimṛśan*) the *brāhmaṇa's* feet, Kṛṣṇa inquired from him.

|| 10.52.30 ||

kaccid dvija-vara-śreṣṭha dharmas te vṛddha-sammataḥ

vartate nāti-kṛcchreṇa santuṣṭa-manasaḥ sadā

TRANSLATION

[The Supreme Lord said:] O best of exalted brāhmaṇas, are your religious practices, sanctioned by senior authorities, proceeding without great difficulty? Is your mind always fully satisfied?

|| 10.52.31 ||

santuṣṭo yarhi varteta brāhmaṇo yena kenacit

ahīyamānaḥ svad dharmāt sa hy asyākhila-kāma-dhuk

TRANSLATION

When a brāhmaṇa is satisfied with whatever comes his way and does not fall away from his religious duties, those very religious principles become his desire cow, fulfilling all his wishes.

COMMENTARY

If a *brāhmaṇa* is unwavering in his *dharma* (*ahīyamānaḥ svad dharmāt*), that dharma (*saḥ*) yields all desires.

|| 10.52.32 ||

asantuṣṭo 'sakṛl lokān āpnoty api sureśvaraḥ

akiñcano 'pi santuṣṭaḥ śete sarvāṅga-vijvaraḥ

TRANSLATION

An unsatisfied brāhmaṇa wanders restlessly from one planet to another, even if he becomes King of heaven. But a satisfied brāhmaṇa, though he may possess nothing, rests peacefully, all his limbs free of distress.

COMMENTARY

The unsatisfied *brāhmaṇa* wanders from planet to planet but never exhausts his thirst for enjoyment, even if he becomes Indra. There is an alternate reading: Even though he becomes Indra, he does not attain the higher worlds. In other words, even though attaining the supreme planets, he suffers as if not having attained them.

|| 10.52.33 ||

viprān sva-lābha-santuṣṭān sādhūn bhūta-suhṛttamān

nirahaṅkāriṇaḥ śāntān namasye śirasāsakṛt

TRANSLATION

I repeatedly bow My head in respect to those brāhmaṇas who are satisfied with their lot. Saintly, prideless and peaceful, they are the best well-wishers of all living beings.

COMMENTARY

A genuine *brāhmaṇa* is satisfied with whatever he obtains by gathering abandoned grains in the fields (*uñcha-vṛtti*). He does not yearn for anything else.

|| 10.52.34 ||

kaccid vaḥ kuśalaṁ brahman rājato yasya hi prajāḥ

sukhaṁ vasanti viṣaye pālyamānāḥ sa me priyaḥ

TRANSLATION

O brāhmaṇa, is your King attending to your welfare? Indeed, that king in whose country the citizens are happy and protected is very dear to Me.

COMMENTARY

That king is dear to Me in whose country (*viṣaye*) the people live happily.

|| 10.52.35 ||

yatas tvam āgato durgaṁ nistīryeha yad-icchayā

sarvaṁ no brūhy aguhyaṁ cet kiṁ kāryaṁ karavāma te

TRANSLATION

Whence have you come, crossing the impassable sea, and for what purpose? Explain all this to Us if it is not a secret, and tell Us what We may do for you.

|| 10.52.36 ||

evaṁ sampṛṣṭa-sampraśno brāhmaṇaḥ parameṣṭhinā

līlā-gṛhīta-dehena tasmai sarvam avarṇayat

TRANSLATION

Thus questioned by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who incar-nates to perform His pastimes, the brāhmaṇa told Him everything.

COMMENTARY

“If you have any questions to ask Me, please ask.” Saying this, Kṛṣṇa then questioned the *brāhmaṇa*. By the actions of His *līlā-śakti* Kṛṣṇa accepts His body (*dehena*) as His own.

|| 10.52.37 ||

śrī-rukmiṇy uvāca

śrutvā guṇān bhuvana-sundara śṛṇvatāṁ te

nirviśya karṇa-vivarair harato ’ṅga-tāpam

rūpaṁ dṛśāṁ dṛśimatām akhilārtha-lābhaṁ

tvayy acyutāviśati cittam apatrapaṁ me

TRANSLATION

Śrī Rukmiṇī said [in her letter, as read by the brāhmaṇa]: O beauty of the worlds, having heard of Your qualities, which enter the ears of those who hear and remove their bodily distress, and having also heard of Your beauty, which fulfills all the visual desires of those who see, I have fixed my shameless mind upon You, O Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

"Opening the seal of the letter which Rukmiṇī had given him after writing it in her own hand in the privacy of her room, the *brāhmaṇa* showed it to Kṛṣṇa as a token of her love. On Kṛṣṇa's request the *brāhmaṇa* read the letter out loud." These are the statements of Śrīdhara Svāmī.

"But how can I accept you, a king's daughter, whom I have never seen or heard about, and who is shamelessly writing a letter to Me as her bridegroom with the intention of having Me marry her?"

If Kṛṣṇa says this, then Rukmiṇī answers, "Yes, this is true, You can say that. But I will express the feelings of my heart. After You have heard this You may accept me or neglect me, favor me or reject me. Nevertheless, depending on whether I obtain You or not, I will either live happily forever more or else die this very day or the next. For one in my condition there is no queston of fear or shame. Therefore I now speak." Then Rukmiṇī expressed herself in seven verses (37-43).

Rukmiṇī said [in her letter], "Oh Acyuta! Hearing about Your beauty and qualities, my mind has lost all shame. I have become completely attached to You. Your beauty and qualities are the two causes of my mind's becoming shameless, and my two ears are also its cause. Therefore both You and I are at fault. Therefore You cannot criticize me and I cannot criticize You."

The suggestion of the word *acyuta* (infallible Kṛṣṇa) is: "O Acyuta, my mind, becoming shameless, has approached You, but You are unmoved (*acyuta*). Now I have no idea what You want to do."

Imagining Kṛṣṇa may respond, "Other men can have attractive forms and qualities, so why do you find fault with them?"

Rukmiṇī said, "Please do not speak like this!" Then she mentions Kṛṣṇa's unique qualities: "Having entered the ears of attentive young women, Your wonderful qualities completely destroy all their pains, both subtle and gross. Tell me, what other man exists who has qualities like You?"

Then Rukmiṇī characterized Kṛṣṇa's beauty: "Your form is more sweet and attractive than the best object for people who are observant. There is an assortment of colors: blue like sapphires or blue lotuses, yellow like gold ornaments and red *kuṅkuma* like rubies and *bandhuli* flowers, and white like moonstone and the moon. What other man possesses such exquisite beauty in limbs, tongue, lips, nails, and other bodily parts?" Therefore Rukmiṇī addressed Kṛṣṇa appropriately, "O beauty of the worlds! You are the most attractive and handsome person in all the material and spiritual worlds!"

|| 10.52.38 ||

kā tvā mukunda mahatī kula-śīla-rūpa-

vidyā-vayo-draviṇa-dhāmabhir ātma-tulyam

dhīrā patiṁ kulavatī na vṛṇīta kanyā

kāle nṛ-siṁha nara-loka-mano-'bhirāmam

TRANSLATION

O Mukunda, You are equal only to Yourself in lineage, character, beauty, knowledge, youthfulness, wealth and influence. O lion among men, You delight the minds of all mankind. What aristocratic, sober-minded and marriageable girl of a good family would not choose You as her husband when the proper time has come?

COMMENTARY

"Granted, I may be the most incomparable man in the universe, but are you the only girl in the whole universe with eyes and ears? I do not see any other maidens with such shamelessness."

Rukmiṇī responds to this in this verse: "O Mukunda, whose face (*mukhe*) beams with a smile like jasmine flowers (*kunda-vat*)." The word Mukunda implies the idea, "You have given me an opportunity to smile too."

"What intelligent, sober girl, endowed with beauty and good qualities coming from a respectable family, would not choose You as her husband?" This implies that only an ugly, ill-natured and unintelligent woman of bad lineage who has not heard about You would not choose You.

“Those with good qualities accept You, who are incomparable in attributes, beauty, knowledge, youth, wealth and power. There are many young marriageable women like me who will accept You when their time comes. But now it is my time. O lion among of men (*nṛ-siṁha*)! You are as uncontrollable as a lion! But I have no desire to control You. Your incomparable beauty and qualities play in the minds of all humans. So what fault is there if You also reside in my mind?”

|| 10.52.39 ||

tan me bhavān khalu vṛtaḥ patir aṅga jāyām

ātmārpitaś ca bhavato ’tra vibho vidhehi

mā vīra-bhāgam abhimarśatu caidya ārād

gomāyu-van mṛga-pater balim ambujākṣa

TRANSLATION

Therefore, my dear Lord, I have chosen You as my husband, and I surrender myself to You. Please come swiftly, O almighty one, and make me Your wife. My dear lotus-eyed Lord, let Śiśupāla never touch the hero’s portion like a jackal stealing the property of a lion.

COMMENTARY

Rukmiṇī said, “Since I am so attracted to You, I therefore have chosen You as my husband. It is not just now, but from the beginning I have selected only You. Both my body and soul have been offered to Your lotus feet. I have sent this letter to inform You of my mental state. If you accept me, I will maintain my life, and if you reject me, I will burn myself up. I will not give myself to anyone else, even if Brahmā himself comes here and commands me.”

“But,” Kṛṣṇa may object, “This offering of yourself to Me is not unmotivated like King Bali’s offering. Indeed, you have an ulterior motive.”

Rukmiṇī said, “True, my offering of myself to You is not like the surrender of Bali Mahārāja, which was *nirbhāva*, without intense love. O all-mighty one! Please accept me as Your wife? Just as when a person gives food to someone else and says ‘You should eat this,’ such a natural self-offering is understood to be superior to a non-motivated offering because it is affected by real love. You should quickly send back the *brāhmaṇa* with a reply so that I know whether You accept me or not.”

“Śiśupāla should not take the share meant for You. If Śiśupāla suddenly comes and touches this body, my hope of attaining You will be destroyed, and this body will burn to ashes in the fire of separation from You. My fear however is that You will lose Your prestige if Śiśupāla comes and takes Your share, like a jackal stealing from a lion. His impudence towards You will be broadcast everywhere.”

The address “O lotus-eyed one” (*ambuja-akṣa*) implies “At that time, even though my body is on fire, I will not experience any pain because I will be meditating on Your lotus eyes.”

|| 10.52.40 ||

pūrteṣṭa-datta-niyama-vrata-deva-vipra

gurv-arcanādibhir alaṁ bhagavān pareśaḥ

ārādhito yadi gadāgraja etya pāṇiṁ

gṛhṇātu me na damaghoṣa-sutādayo ’nye

TRANSLATION

If I have sufficiently worshiped the Supreme Personality of Godhead by pious works, sacrifices, charity, rituals and vows, and also by worshiping the demigods, brāhmaṇas and gurus, then may Gadāgraja come and take my hand, and not Damaghoṣa’s son or anyone else.

COMMENTARY

Rukmiṇī said, “O most difficult to attain person! You cannot be obtained simply by the good acts of one birth. Therefore, if I have performed pious acts in previous lives, whether with a desire to attain You or without a desire to attain You, let the results come now in the form of attaining You. This is my only prayer. If I have worshiped the Lord profusely by digging wells (*purta*), by sacrifices (*iṣṭa*), by giving charity (*dāna*), by regulations (*niyama*) such as bathing in holy places, observing vows like Ekādaśī, and by worshiping the demigods, *gurus* and *brāhmaṇas*, which are corollaries to the worship of the Lord Himself, then may the Supreme Lord as a human, the elder brother of Gada, come here and accept me, a human in marriage. No one else should come, not even Nārāyaṇa nor any of the demigods or human beings.”

That the son of Damaghoṣa (Śiśupāla) is indicated in Rukmiṇī’s writing as the first of these “others” is because her marriage to him is imminent.

|| 10.52.41 ||

śvo bhāvini tvam ajitodvahane vidarbhān

guptaḥ sametya pṛtanā-patibhiḥ parītaḥ

nirmathya caidya-magadhendra-balaṁ prasahya

māṁ rākṣasena vidhinodvaha vīrya-śulkām

TRANSLATION

O unconquerable one, tomorrow when my marriage ceremony is about to begin, You should arrive unseen in Vidarbha and surround Yourself with the leaders of Your army. Then crush the forces of Caidya and Magadhendra and marry me in the Rākṣasa style, winning me with Your valor.

COMMENTARY

"Yes, I accept you according to your past pious actions, but what can I do now that you have been given to Śiśupāla in marriage?" In response to this, Rukmiṇī proposes a method in this verse. By saying "O Ajita" Rukmiṇī implies that no one can possibly defeat Kṛṣṇa.

Rukmiṇī said, "At the upcoming wedding, You should first enter the city unseen, without troops. Once having entered the city, You should surround Yourself with Your military commanders to show Your strength. If You don't do this, then it will be difficult to enter the city quickly, for the troops will accost You outside the city. After entering the city, however, You can say that You have come just to see the splendor of my marriage ceremony, and then the army will have no reason to fight with You."

"Then You can whisk me away at Your leisure. If they suspect an undesirable turn of events and start fighting with You, however, You should show Your heroism; just as You received Lakṣmī from churning (*nirmanthana*) the ocean. Then You should forcefully kidnap me, the reward for Your show of strength."

|| 10.52.42 ||

antaḥ-purāntara-carīm anihatya bandhūn

tvām udvahe katham iti pravadāmy upāyam

pūrve-dyur asti mahatī kula-deva-yātrā

yasyāṁ bahir nava-vadhūr girijām upeyāt

TRANSLATION

Since I will be staying within the inner chambers of the palace, You may wonder, "How can I carry you away without killing some of your relatives?" But I shall tell You a way: On the day before the marriage there is a grand procession to honor the royal family's deity, and in this procession the new bride goes outside the city to visit Goddess Girijā.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa asked, "Certainly I will destroy the military force of Śiśupāla and the others. Yet in kidnapping you, who live in the palace's inner sanctum, won't I have to also kill your relatives?"

Rukmiṇī cleverly answered in this verse: "There is a temple of Girijā (Durgā) outside the city. You can easily kidnap me from there without killing my relatives."

|| 10.52.43 ||

yasyāṅghri-paṅkaja-rajaḥ-snapanaṁ mahānto

vāñchanty umā-patir ivātma-tamo-'pahatyai

yarhy ambujākṣa na labheya bhavat-prasādaṁ

jahyām asūn vrata-kṛśān śata-janmabhiḥ syāt

TRANSLATION

O lotus-eyed one, great souls like Lord Śiva hanker to bathe in the dust of Your lotus feet and thereby destroy their ignorance. If I cannot obtain Your mercy, I shall simply give up my vital force, which will have become weak from the severe penances I will perform. Then, after hundreds of lifetimes of endeavor, I may obtain Your mercy.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, "Princess, you may say that, but how can you get My mercy without having performed pious acts in the past to attain Me?"

To this Rukmiṇī replies, "In order to attain You in a future life, in this life I will practice celibacy and austerities. If after one lifetime's penances I do not attain You, then I will

continue doing penances for even ten million lifetimes. I can never give up my desire to attain You. And if You tell me that there are many contaminations in me that prevent my attaining You, then let me dispel these with the dust particles of Your lotus feet, which are obtainable by performance of austerities."

"Great devotees like Śiva desire to bathe in the dust of Your lotus feet in order to destroy the root of their ignorance. I will also destroy all my contaminations by bathing in the dust of Your lotus feet, which I will attain by austerities. If I do not attain Your mercy, then I will give up my life by fasting."

Kṛṣṇa: "What will you accomplish by that?"

Rukmiṇī: "I will give up my life time after time for hundreds of births until I attain Your mercy."

By saying "O lotus-eyed one," Rukmiṇī implies, "It is my eagerness to see Your beautiful lotus eyes which is the cause of these difficulties I am suffering."

|| 10.52.44 ||

brāhmaṇa uvāca

ity ete guhya-sandeśā yadu-deva mayāhṛtāḥ

vimṛśya kartuṁ yac cātra kriyatāṁ tad anantaram

TRANSLATION

The brāhmaṇa said: This is the confidential message I have brought with me, O Lord of the Yadus. Please consider what must be done in these circumstances, and do it at once.

COMMENTARY

The brāhmaṇa said, "O Lord, I swear that I have not revealed this message (*guhya-sandeśā*) to anyone, since that would embarrass Rukmiṇī. It is not necessary to consult with the Yadus, because You are their Lord (*yadu-deva*), and the source of their

intelligence. After considering the matter You should immediately (*anantaram*) do the needful.”

Thus ends the commentary on the Fifty Second Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Fifty-three

Kṛṣṇa Kidnaps Rukmiṇī

|| 10.53.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

vaidarbhyāḥ sa tu sandeśaṁ niśamya yadu-nandanaḥ

pragṛhya pāṇinā pāṇiṁ prahasann idam abravīt

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus hearing the confidential message of Princess Vaidarbhī, Lord Yadunandana took the brāhmaṇa's hand and, smiling, spoke to him as follows.

COMMENTARY

In this chapter, Kṛṣṇa goes to Kuṇḍina city, is worshiped by Bhīṣ-maka and steals Rukmiṇī when she leaves the city to worship Durgā.

Rukmiṇī was disturbed internally and externally by her attachment to the Lord. Kṛṣṇa however, though attached to Rukmiṇī and moved internally, did not show that and instead smiled as He spoke.

|| 10.53.2 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

tathāham api tac-citto nidrāṁ ca na labhe niśi

vedāham rukmiṇā dveṣān mamodvāho nivāritaḥ

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord said: Just as Rukmiṇī's mind is fixed on Me, My mind is fixed on her. I can't even sleep at night. I know that Rukmī, out of envy, has forbidden our marriage.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, "I know (*veda:vedmi*) that Rukmī has prevented his sister's marriage to Me."

|| 10.53.3 ||

tām ānayiṣya unmathya rājanyāpasadān mṛdhe

mat-parām anavadyāṅgīm edhaso 'gni-śikhām iva

TRANSLATION

She has dedicated herself exclusively to Me, and her beauty is flawless. I will bring her here after thrashing those worthless kings in battle, just as one brings a blazing flame out of firewood.

COMMENTARY

When the fire lying dormant in wood bursts into flames, it consumes the wood. By saying *edhaso 'gni-sikhām iva*, Kṛṣṇa implies, "Rukmiṇī, who is enveloped by wicked members of the royal order like Rukmī, will cause them all to become burned up. I, on the other hand, will only be the stimulus for that."

|| 10.53.4 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

udvāharkṣaṁ ca vijñāya rukmiṇyā madhusūdanaḥ

rathaḥ saṁyujyatām āśu dārukety āha sārathim

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Lord Madhusūdana also understood the exact lunar time for Rukmiṇī's wedding. Thus He told His driver, "Dāruka, ready My chariot immediately."

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa understood through the mouth of a *brāhmaṇa* that the auspicious star for marriage would occur two nights in the future, so He called His charioteer.

|| 10.53.5 ||

sa cāśvaiḥ śaibya-sugrīva-meghapuṣpa-balāhakaiḥ

yuktaṁ ratham upānīya tasthau prāñjalir agrataḥ

TRANSLATION

Dāruka brought the Lord's chariot, yoked with the horses named Śaibya, Sugrīva, Meghapuṣpa and Balāhaka. He then stood before Lord Kṛṣṇa with joined palms.

COMMENTARY

The *Padma Purāṇa* describes the colors of Kṛṣṇa's horses:

> *śaibyas tu śuka-patrābhaḥ sugrīvo hema-piṅgalaḥ*
>
> *meghapuṣpas tu meghābhaḥ pāṇḍuro hi balāhakaḥ*

> "Śaibya was green like a parrot's wings, Sugrīva yellow-gold, Meghapuspa the color of a cloud, and Balāhaka whitish."

|| 10.53.6 ||

āruhya syandanaṁ śaurir dvijam āropya tūrṇa-gaiḥ

ānartād eka-rātreṇa vidarbhān agamad dhayaiḥ

TRANSLATION

Lord Śauri mounted His chariot and had the brāhmaṇa do likewise. Then the Lord's swift horses took them from the Ānarta district to Vidarbha in a single night.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa heard the message of Rukmiṇī in the evening, immediately left on His chariot, and arrived at Kuṇḍina early the next morning.

|| 10.53.7 ||

rājā sa kuṇḍina-patiḥ putra-sneha-vaśānugaḥ

śiśupālāya svāṁ kanyāṁ dāsyan karmāṇy akārayat

TRANSLATION

King Bhīṣmaka, the master of Kuṇḍina, having succumbed to the sway of affection for his son, was about to give his daughter to Śiśupāla. The King saw to all the required preparations.

COMMENTARY

Due to attachment to his son, Bhīṣmaka consented to marry his daughter to Śiśupāla, and then decorated the city accordingly.

|| 10.53.8-9 ||

puraṁ sammṛṣṭa-saṁsikta-mārga-rathyā-catuṣpatham

citra-dhvaja-patākābhis toraṇaiḥ samalaṅkṛtam

srag-gandha-mālyābharaṇair virajo-'mbara-bhūṣitaiḥ

juṣṭaṁ strī-puruṣaiḥ śrīmad-gṛhair aguru-dhūpitaiḥ

TRANSLATION

The king had the main avenues, commercial roads and intersections thoroughly cleaned and then sprinkled with water, and he also had the city decorated with triumphant archways and multicolored banners on poles. The men and women of the city, arrayed in spotless raiment and anointed with fragrant sandalwood paste, wore precious necklaces, flower garlands and jeweled ornaments, and their opulent homes were filled with the aroma of aguru.

COMMENTARY

The men and women wore spotless clothing, necklaces, scents and garlands, and covered their bodies with sandalwood paste. The main roads were cleaned, sprinkled with water, and decorated with various kinds of banners on flagpoles.

|| 10.53.10 ||

pitṝn devān samabhyarcya viprāṁś ca vidhi-van nṛpa

bhojayitvā yathā-nyāyaṁ vācayām āsa maṅgalam

TRANSLATION

O King, in accordance with prescribed rituals, Mahārāja Bhīṣmaka worshiped the forefathers, demigods and brāhmaṇas, feeding them all properly. Then He had the traditional mantras chanted for the well-being of the bride.

|| 10.53.11 ||

su-snātāṁ su-datīṁ kanyāṁ kṛta-kautuka-maṅgalām

āhatāṁśuka-yugmena bhūṣitāṁ bhūṣaṇottamaiḥ

TRANSLATION

The bride cleaned her teeth and bathed, after which she put on the auspicious wedding necklace. Then she was dressed in brand-new upper and lower garments and adorned with most excellent jeweled ornaments.

COMMENTARY

Rukmiṇī wore two pieces of new cloth fresh from the loom (*āhatāṁśuka*). Lord Brahmā states in the *Smṛti* scriptures that only spotless clothing fresh off the loom should be worn during auspicious ceremonies.

|| 10.53.12 ||

cakruḥ sāma-rg-yajur-mantrair vadhvā rakṣāṁ dvijottamāḥ

purohito 'tharva-vid vai juhāva graha-śāntaye

TRANSLATION

The best of brāhmaṇas chanted mantras of the Ṛg, Sāma and Yajur Vedas for the bride's protection, and the priest learned in the Atharva Veda offered oblations to pacify the controlling planets.

COMMENTARY

The verb *cakruḥ* (they did) can be taken as the verb of the last line of the previous verse as well as the verb of the present verse. Thus the *brāhmaṇas* had Rukmiṇī put on fresh cloth, and then they chanted *mantras* for her protection. *Atharvavid* means "expert knower of the *mantras* of the *Atharva Veda*," since the *Atharva Veda* very often deals with the pacification of unfavorable planets.

|| 10.53.13 ||

hiraṇya-rūpya vāsāṁsi tilāṁś ca guḍa-miśritān

prādād dhenūś ca viprebhyo rājā vidhi-vidāṁ varaḥ

TRANSLATION

Outstanding in his knowledge of regulative principles, the King rewarded the brāhmaṇas with gold, silver, clothing, cows and sesame seeds mixed with raw sugar.

|| 10.53.14 ||

evaṁ cedi-patī rājā damaghoṣaḥ sutāya vai

kārayām āsa mantra-jñaiḥ sarvam abhyudayocitam

TRANSLATION

Rājā Damaghoṣa, lord of Cedi, had also engaged brāhmaṇas expert in chanting mantras to perform all rituals necessary to assure his son's prosperity.

COMMENTARY

Damaghoṣa also performed ceremonies for his son's (*sutaya*) [Śiśupāla] marriage.

|| 10.53.15 ||

mada-cyudbhir gajānīkaiḥ syandanair hema-mālibhiḥ

patty-aśva-saṅkulaiḥ sainyaiḥ parītaḥ kuṇḍīnaṁ yayau

TRANSLATION

King Damaghoṣa traveled to Kuṇḍina accompanied by armies of elephants exuding mada, chariots hung with golden chains, and numerous cavalry and infantry soldiers.

COMMENTARY

Liquid (*mada*) dripped from the foreheads of the elephants in procession.

|| 10.53.16 ||

taṁ vai vidarbhādhipatiḥ samabhyetyābhipūjya ca

niveśayām āsa mudā kalpitānya-niveśane

TRANSLATION

Bhīṣmaka, the lord of Vidarbha, came out of the city and met King Damaghoṣa, offering him tokens of respect. Bhīṣmaka then settled Damaghoṣa in a residence especially constructed for the occasion.

|| 10.53.17 ||

tatra śālvo jarāsandho dantavakro vidūrathaḥ

ājagmuś caidya-pakṣīyāḥ pauṇḍrakādyāḥ sahasraśaḥ

TRANSLATION

Śiśupāla's supporters—Śālva, Jarāsandha, Dantavakra and Vidūra-tha—all came, along with Pauṇḍraka and thousands of other kings.

|| 10.53.18-19 ||

kṛṣṇa-rāma-dviṣo yattāḥ kanyāṁ caidyāya sādhitum

yady āgatya haret kṛṣno rāmādyair yadubhir vṛtaḥ

yotsyāmaḥ saṁhatās tena iti niścita-mānasāḥ

ājagmur bhū-bhujaḥ sarve samagra-bala-vāhanāḥ

TRANSLATION

To secure the bride for Śiśupāla, the kings who envied Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma came to the following decision among themselves: "If Kṛṣṇa comes here with Balarāma and the other Yadus to steal the bride, we shall band together and fight Him." Thus those envious kings went to the wedding with their entire armies and a full complement of military conveyances.

COMMENTARY

The kings came to insure (*sādhitum*) that Rukmiṇī was given to Śiśupāla.

|| 10.53.20-21 ||

śrutvaitad bhagavān rāmo vipakṣīya nṛpodyamam

kṛṣṇaṁ caikaṁ gataṁ hartuṁ kanyāṁ kalaha-śaṅkitaḥ

balena mahatā sārdhaṁ bhrātṛ-sneha-pariplutaḥ

tvaritaḥ kuṇḍinaṁ prāgād gajāśva-ratha-pattibhiḥ

TRANSLATION

When Lord Balarāma heard about these preparations of the inimical kings and how Lord Kṛṣṇa had set off alone to steal the bride, He feared that a fight would ensue. Immersed in affection for His brother, He hurried to Kuṇḍina with a mighty army consisting of infantry and of soldiers riding on elephants, horses and chariots.

COMMENTARY

Hearing from a succession of persons (*jana-paramparayā*), Balarāma (*bhagavān rāmo*), even though endowed with omniscience and omnipotency, feared an upcoming battle, and therefore went to Kuṇḍina with a huge contingent of troops. Balarāma's strong affection for His brother covered His natural omniscience. For it is human nature to worry about the dangers imminent for a friend.

|| 10.53.22 ||

bhīṣma-kanyā varārohā kāṅkṣanty āgamanaṁ hareḥ

pratyāpattim apaśyantī dvijasyācintayat tadā

TRANSLATION

The lovely daughter of Bhīṣmaka anxiously awaited the arrival of Kṛṣṇa, but when she did not see the brāhmaṇa return she thought as follows.

|| 10.53.23 ||

aho tri-yāmāntarita udvāho me 'lpa-rādhasaḥ

nāgacchaty aravindākṣo nāhaṁ vedmy atra kāraṇam

so 'pi nāvartate 'dyāpi mat-sandeśa-haro dvijaḥ

TRANSLATION

[Princess Rukmiṇī thought:] Alas, my wedding is to take place when the night ends! How unlucky I am! Lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa does not come. I don't know why. And even the brāhmaṇa messenger has not yet returned.

COMMENTARY

Even before sunrise Rukmiṇī felt anxious because of fear and eagerness. Rukmiṇī thought, "This night of three *yāmās* (nine hours) has finished. Tomorrow night is the fixed time for the wedding of this most unfortunate woman."

|| 10.53.24 ||

api mayy anavadyātmā dṛṣṭvā kiñcij jugupsitam

mat-pāṇi-grahaṇe nūnaṁ nāyāti hi kṛtodyamaḥ

TRANSLATION

Perhaps the faultless Lord, even while preparing to come here, saw something contemptible in me and therefore has not come to take my hand.

COMMENTARY

Rukmiṇī expressed doubt with the word *api* (perhaps). Rukmiṇī thought, “At first Kṛṣṇa was ready to come, and because the *brāhmaṇa* would accompany Him, He did not send the *brāhmaṇa*. However at the time of leaving, Kṛṣṇa saw some fault in my body or character, so He gave up His plan to come here. It would be improper for Him, who is faultless (*anavadya*) in body and mind to marry me who am full of faults. Being unsuccessful, the *brāhmaṇa* has not come to see me, out of fear that I would give up my body upon hearing the bad news.”

|| 10.53.25 ||

durbhagāyā na me dhātā nānukūlo maheśvaraḥ

devī vā vimukhī gaurī rudrāṇī girijā satī

TRANSLATION

I am extremely unfortunate, for the creator is not favorably disposed toward me, nor is the great Lord Śiva. Or perhaps Śiva’s wife, Devī, who is known as Gaurī, Rudrāṇī, Girijā and Satī, has turned against me.

COMMENTARY

This verse reveals the intense anxiety of Rukmiṇī, who thought, “Maybe Kṛṣṇa did want to come, but He was stopped on the path by the creator, Brahmā, who is not favorably inclined toward me. But why should he be unfavorable? Perhaps the cause is Lord Śiva, who has become angry because my failure to properly worship him on some occasion. But he is Maheśvara, the great controller, so why should he be angry with such an insignificant and foolish girl as me?”

“Perhaps it is Śiva’s wife, Gaurī-devī, who is somehow displeased with me, even though I worship her every day. Alas, alas! How have I offended her so that she has turned against me? But after all, she is Rudrānī, the wife of Rudra, and her very name means ‘one who makes everyone cry.’ So perhaps she and Śiva want me to cry. But seeing that

I am so miserable that I am about to give up my life, why don't they soften their hearts? There must some fault in Gaurī's heritage. The reason must be that Durga-devī is also called Girijā, the adopted daughter of a mountain (*girijā*), so how could her heart melt, being so stone-like? In her incarnation as Satī she gave up her body, so perhaps she now wants me to give up my body too."

|| 10.53.26 ||

evaṁ cintayatī bālā govinda-hṛta-mānasā

nyamīlayata kāla-jñā netre cāśru-kalākule

TRANSLATION

As she thought in this way, the young maiden, whose mind had been stolen by Kṛṣṇa, closed her tear-filled eyes, remembering that there was still time.

COMMENTARY

Rukmiṇī thought, "O fickle mind! Do not prepare to give up this body now, because the time of Kṛṣṇa's coming has not yet passed. Therefore, before giving up this body, let me now see Kṛṣṇa's face in meditation. Please do not prevent this dear mind." Then she closed her eyes.

|| 10.53.27 ||

evaṁ vadhvāḥ pratīkṣantyā govindāgamanaṁ nṛpa

vāma ūrur bhujo netram asphuran priya-bhāṣiṇaḥ

TRANSLATION

O King, as the bride thus awaited the arrival of Govinda, she felt a twitch in her left thigh, arm and eye. This was a sign that something desirable would happen.

COMMENTARY

Rukmiṇī's left thigh and other bodily limbs trembled, which are signs of auspiciousness (*priya-bhāṣiṇaḥ*).

|| 10.53.28 ||

atha kṛṣṇa-vinirdiṣṭaḥ sa eva dvija-sattamaḥ

antaḥpura-carīṁ devīṁ rāja-putrīm dadarśa ha

TRANSLATION

Just then the purest of learned brāhmaṇas, following Kṛṣṇa's order, came to see the divine Princess Rukmiṇī within the inner chambers of the palace.

COMMENTARY

The brāhmaṇa was especially ordered (*kṛṣṇa-vinirdiṣṭaḥ*) by Kṛṣṇa: "Go quickly and tell Rukmiṇī that I have reached the city gardens." The word *devīṁ* means that in the rapture of seeing Kṛṣṇa in her meditation, Rukmiṇī was glowing (*dyotamānām*). Due to her extreme absorption in meditation on Kṛṣṇa, Rukmiṇī was walking inside her chambers with the purpose of going to Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.53.29 ||

sā taṁ prahṛṣṭa-vadanam avyagrātma-gatiṁ satī

ālakṣya lakṣaṇābhijñā samapṛcchac chuci-smitā

TRANSLATION

Noting the brāhmaṇa's joyful face and serene movements, saintly Rukmiṇī, who could expertly interpret such symptoms, inquired from him with a pure smile.

COMMENTARY

"I, Sunanda *brāhmaṇa*, have come now from the side of your beloved. Please cast your glance upon me," said the *brāhmaṇa* in a loud voice. Thus roused from her meditation, Rukmiṇī looked at the *brāhmaṇa* as described in this verse.

Noticing his serenity and the joy in his face, Rukmiṇī's anxiety disappeared. Rukmiṇī was expert in reading omens (*lakṣaṇa-abhijñā*), so she understood that the *brāhmaṇa* was successful in his mission because of his blissful countenance and the twitching of her left eye. Rukmiṇī then smiled slightly (*suci-smitā*), indicating her genuine joy. Previously she had been falsely smiling to hide her inner suffering.

|| 10.53.30 ||

tasyā āvedayat prāptaṁ śaśaṁsa yadu-nandanam

uktaṁ ca satya-vacanam ātmopanayanaṁ prati

TRANSLATION

The brāhmaṇa announced to her the arrival of Lord Yadunandana and relayed the Lord's promise to marry her.

COMMENTARY

He announced to her that Yadunandana had arrived. He described how Kṛṣṇa had promised to marry her, relating His words such as *tām ānayiṣya*, "I will bring Rukmiṇī here [to Dvārakā]." (SB 10.53.3)

|| 10.53.31 ||

tam āgataṁ samājñāya vaidarbhī hṛṣṭa-mānasā

na paśyantī brāhmaṇāya priyam anyan nanāma sā

TRANSLATION

Princess Vaidarbhī was overjoyed to learn of Kṛṣṇa's arrival. Not finding anything at hand suitable to offer the brāhmaṇa, she simply bowed down to him.

COMMENTARY

"What can I give to this *brāhmaṇa* to satisfy him as remuneration?" Thinking like this, Rukmiṇī simply bowed down, since she did not see any dear thing (*priya*) to express her indebtedness, even the offering of her own self. But at that very moment, the house of the *brāhmaṇa* became filled with all sorts of treasures. This was the response of Mahā-Lakṣmī to show her gratitude.

|| 10.53.32 ||

prāptau śrutvā sva-duhitur udvāha-prekṣaṇotsukau

abhyayāt tūrya-ghoṣeṇa rāma-kṛṣṇau samarhaṇaiḥ

TRANSLATION

The King, upon hearing that Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma had come and were eager to witness his daughter's wedding, went forth with abundant offerings to greet Them as music resounded.

|| 10.53.33 ||

madhu-parkam upānīya vāsāṁsi virajāṁsi saḥ

upāyanāny abhīṣṭāni vidhi-vat samapūjayat

TRANSLATION

Presenting Them with madhu-parka, new clothing and other desirable gifts, he worshiped Them according to standard rituals.

|| 10.53.34 ||

tayor niveśanaṁ śrīmad upākalpya mahā-matiḥ

sa-sainyayoḥ sānugayor ātithyaṁ vidadhe yathā

TRANSLATION

Generous King Bhīṣmaka arranged opulent accommodations for the two Lords, and also for Their army and entourage. In this way he afforded Them proper hospitality.

COMMENTARY

Bhīṣmaka is described as generous (*mahā-matiḥ*) because he was contented in his heart, knowing that Kṛṣṇa had come to marry his qualified daughter. Therefore he elaborately worshiped Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.53.35 ||

evaṁ rājñāṁ sametānāṁ yathā-vīryaṁ yathā-vayaḥ

yathā-balaṁ yathā-vittaṁ sarvaiḥ kāmaiḥ samarhayat

TRANSLATION

Thus it was that Bhīṣmaka gave all desirable things to the kings who had assembled for the occasion, honoring them as befitted their political power, age, physical prowess and wealth.

|| 10.53.36 ||

kṛṣṇam āgatam ākarṇya vidarbha-pura-vāsinaḥ

āgatya netrāñjalibhiḥ papus tan-mukha-paṅkajam

TRANSLATION

When the residents of Vidarbha-pura heard that Lord Kṛṣṇa had come, they all went to see Him. With the cupped palms of their eyes they drank the honey of His lotus face.

COMMENTARY

The phrase *papus tan-mukha-paṅkajam* means, "The people drank the incomparable sweetness of Kṛṣṇa's lotus face." This indicates the unlimited quantity of honey contained in this lotus, and how wonderful it was that many parties could drink from just one lotus at the same time.

|| 10.53.37 ||

asyaiva bhāryā bhavituṁ rukmiṇy arhati nāparā

asāv apy anavadyātmā bhaiṣmyāḥ samucitaḥ patiḥ

TRANSLATION

[The people of the city said:] Rukmiṇī, and no one else, deserves to become His wife, and He also, possessing such flawless beauty, is the only suitable husband for Princess Bhaiṣmī.

COMMENTARY

This verse combines statements made by different citizens of Vaidarbha. Seven statements have been combined in one: (1) For Him alone and no other; (2) As a wife, not as an enjoyable object; (3) Rukmiṇī alone and no one else; (4) This certainly must be, and should not be avoided; (5) He alone and no one else; (6) For Rukmiṇī and no one else; (7) He is perfectly suited (*samucitaḥ*), not at all unsuitable.

These seven statements have the negative qualifier “no one else” (*na aparā*) “nor nothing else” applied to each statement. Some said, “Rukmiṇī and no one else deserves to be Kṛṣṇa’s wife. Others said, “She should be Kṛṣṇa’s wife and nothing else, such as an object of enjoyment.” Others said, “Rukmiṇī alone and no one else should be Kṛṣṇa’s wife.”

In this way also four other statements could be made: “Rukmiṇī should certainly be Kṛṣṇa’s wife, there is no question about it.” “Kṛṣṇa and only Kṛṣṇa should be Rukmiṇī’s husband.” “Kṛṣṇa should be the husband of Rukmiṇī only.” “Kṛṣṇa must be the husband of Rukmiṇī.” To say it is a fault of contradiction because of the impossibility of combining seven statements in one is not correct because the authorities say: *sambhavaty eka-vākyatve vākya-bhedo hi gauravam*, “A divergence of statements can be spoken within one statement when it expresses the importance of the subject.”

|| 10.53.38 ||

kiñcit su-caritaṁ yan nas tena tuṣṭas tri-loka-kṛt

anugṛhṇātu gṛhṇātu vaidarbhyāḥ pāṇim acyutaḥ

TRANSLATION

May Acyuta, the creator of the three worlds, be satisfied with whatever pious work we may have done and show His mercy by taking the hand of Vaidarbhī.

COMMENTARY

The citizens said, “Let Kṛṣṇa be satisfied with whatever pious acts (*su-caritam:sukrtam*) we have done. We offer all our pious credits to Rukmiṇī so she can marry Kṛṣṇa.”

|| 10.53.39 ||

evaṁ prema-kalā-baddhā vadanti sma puraukasaḥ

kanyā cāntaḥ-purāt prāgād bhaṭair guptāmbikālayam

TRANSLATION

Bound by their swelling love, the city’s residents spoke in this way. Then the bride, protected by guards, left the inner palace to visit the temple of Ambikā.

COMMENTARY

The citizens spoke out due to their deep love (*prema-kalā-baddhā*) for Rukmiṇī. The *Medinī* dictionary defines the word *kalā* as follows: *kalā mūle pravṛddhau syāc chilādāv aṁśa-mātrake*. "The word *kalā* means 'a root,' 'increase,' 'a stone' or 'a mere part.'"

|| 10.53.40-41 ||

padbhyāṁ viniryayau draṣṭuṁ bhavānyāḥ pāda-pallavam

sā cānudhyāyatī samyaṅ mukunda-caraṇāmbujam

yata-vāṅ mātṛbhiḥ sārdhaṁ sakhībhiḥ parivāritā

guptā rāja-bhaṭaiḥ śūraiḥ sannaddhair udyatāyudhaiḥ

mṛḍaṅga-śaṅkha-paṇavās tūrya-bheryaś ca jaghnire

TRANSLATION

Rukmiṇī silently went out on foot to see the lotus feet of the deity Bhavānī. Accompanied by her mothers and girlfriends and protected by the King's valiant soldiers, who held their upraised weapons at the ready, she simply absorbed her mind in the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. And all the while mṛdaṅgas, conchshells, paṇavas, horns and other instruments resounded.

|| 10.53.42-43 ||

nānopahāra balibhir vāramukhyāḥ sahasraśaḥ

srag-gandha-vastrābharaṇair dvija-patnyaḥ sv-alaṅkṛtāḥ

gāyantyaś ca stuvantaś ca gāyakā vādya-vādakāḥ

parivārya vadhūṁ jagmuḥ sūta-māgadha-vandinaḥ

TRANSLATION

Behind the bride followed thousands of prominent courtesans bearing various offerings and presents, along with well-adorned brāhmaṇas' wives singing and reciting prayers and bearing gifts of garlands, scents, clothing and jewelry. There were also professional singers, musicians, bards, chroniclers and heralds.

COMMENTARY

Rukmiṇī was carried in a palanquin from the city palace to the temple complex of Durgā. Then she walked the fifteen foot distance into the temple, while surrounded by guards. *Mṛdaṅgas* and conches resounded auspiciously.

|| 10.53.44 ||

āsādya devī-sadanaṁ dhauta-pāda-karāmbujā

upaspṛśya śuciḥ śāntā praviveśāmbikāntikam

TRANSLATION

Upon reaching the goddess's temple, Rukmiṇī first washed her lotus feet and hands and then sipped water for purification. Thus sanctified and peaceful, she came into the presence of mother Ambikā.

COMMENTARY

Rukmiṇī performed *ācamana* (*upaspṛśya*) and entered the inner sanctum (*devī* or *deva sadanaṁ*). The masculine is sometimes used for female deities in their sanctum just as the masculine is used for female animals while they are still in the womb.

|| 10.53.45 ||

tāṁ vai pravayaso bālāṁ vidhi-jñā vipra-yoṣitaḥ

bhavānīṁ vandayāṁ cakrur bhava-patnīṁ bhavānvitām

TRANSLATION

The older wives of brāhmaṇas, expert in the knowledge of rituals, led young Rukmiṇī in offering respects to Bhavānī, who appeared with her consort, Lord Bhava.

COMMENTARY

The elderly wives of the brāhmaṇas, who were expert in *śāstra* and knew of Rukmiṇī's desire (*vidhi-jñāḥ*) to marry Kṛṣṇa, had her worship Durgā along with Śiva. They prompted Rukmiṇī to pray thus: "O Durgā, just as you, the wife of Śiva, are always united with Śiva, please make me Kṛṣṇa's wife and keep me always united with Him."

Having seen Kṛṣṇa, they prayed in the same way as the citizens did previously, “May the results of our pious acts be given to Rukmiṇī.”

|| 10.53.46 ||

namasye tvāmbike ’bhīkṣṇaṁ sva-santāna-yutāṁ śivām

bhūyāt patir me bhagavān kṛṣṇas tad anumodatām

TRANSLATION

[Princess Rukmiṇī prayed:] O mother Ambikā, wife of Lord Śiva, I repeatedly offer my obeisances unto you, together with your children. May Lord Kṛṣṇa become my husband. Please grant this!

COMMENTARY

The elderly wives of the *brāhmaṇas* led her in chanting the *mantra* mentioned in this verse: “May Gaṇeśa remove all the obstacles now facing me. May you consent that Kṛṣṇa will become my husband.”

Durgā answered, “So be it! May Kṛṣṇa be your husband!”

|| 10.53.47-48 ||

adbhir gandhākṣatair dhūpair vāsaḥ-sraṅ-mālya bhūṣaṇaiḥ

nānopahāra-balibhiḥ pradīpāvalibhiḥ pṛthak

vipra-striyaḥ patimatīs tathā taiḥ samapūjayat

lavaṇāpūpa-tāmbūla-kaṇṭha-sūtra-phalekṣubhiḥ

TRANSLATION

Rukmiṇī worshiped the goddess with water, scents, whole grains, incense, clothing, garlands, necklaces, jewelry and other prescribed offerings and gifts, and also with arrays of lamps. The married brāhmaṇa women each performed worship simultaneously with the same items, also offering savories and cakes, prepared betel nut, sacred threads, fruit and sugar-cane juice.

COMMENTARY

Sran:srak are flower garlands and mālya are jeweled necklaces. *Lavaṇa-āpūpa* (savory cakes) refers to what is known as *kacorikā*.

|| 10.53.49 ||

tasyai striyas tāḥ pradaduḥ śeṣāṁ yuyujur āśiṣaḥ

tābhyo devyai namaś cakre śeṣāṁ ca jagṛhe vadhūḥ

TRANSLATION

The ladies gave the bride the remnants of the offerings and then blessed her. She in turn bowed down to them and the deity and accepted the remnants as prasādam.

COMMENTARY

Rukmiṇī offered respects to Ambikā and took her remnants (*śeṣāṁ*) as *prasāda*.

|| 10.53.50 ||

muni-vratam atha tyaktvā niścakrāmāmbikā-gṛhāt

pragṛhya pāṇinā bhṛtyāṁ ratna-mudropaśobhinā

TRANSLATION

The princess then gave up her vow of silence and left the Ambikā temple, holding on to a maidservant with her hand, which was adorned with a jeweled ring.

COMMENTARY

Muni-vratam means “vow of silence.”

|| 10.53.51-55 ||

tāṁ deva-māyām iva dhīra-mohinīṁ

su-madhyamāṁ kuṇḍala-maṇḍitānanām

śyāmāṁ nitambārpita-ratna-mekhalāṁ

vyañjat-stanīṁ kuntala-śaṅkitekṣaṇām

śuci-smitāṁ bimba-phalādhara-dyuti-

śoṇāyamāna-dvija-kunda-kuḍmalām

padā calantīṁ kala-haṁsa-gāminīṁ

siñjat-kalā-nūpura-dhāma-śobhinā

vilokya vīrā mumuhuḥ samāgatā

yaśasvinas tat-kṛta-hṛc-chayārditāḥ

yāṁ vīkṣya te nṛpatayas tad udāra-hāsa-

vrīdāvaloka-hṛta-cetasa ujjhitāstrāḥ

petuḥ kṣitau gaja-rathāśva-gatā vimūḍhā

yātrā-cchalena haraye 'rpayatīṁ sva-śobhām

saivaṁ śanaiś calayatī cala-padma-kośau

prāptiṁ tadā bhagavataḥ prasamīkṣamāṇā

utsārya vāma-karajair alakān apaṅgaiḥ

prāptān hriyaikṣata nṛpān dadṛśe 'cyutaṁ ca

tāṁ rāja-kanyāṁ ratham ārurakṣatīṁ

jahāra kṛṣṇo dviṣatāṁ samīkṣatām

TRANSLATION

Rukmiṇī appeared as enchanting as the Lord's illusory potency, who enchants even the sober and grave. Thus the kings gazed upon her virgin beauty, her shapely waist, and her lovely face adorned with earrings. Her hips were graced with a jewel-studded belt, her breasts were just budding, and her eyes seemed apprehensive of her encroaching locks of hair. She smiled sweetly, her jasmine-bud teeth reflecting the glow of her bimba-red lips. As she walked with the motions of a royal swan, the effulgence of her tinkling ankle bells beautified her feet. Seeing her, the assembled heroes were totally bewildered. Lust tore at their hearts. Indeed, when the kings saw her broad smile and shy glance, they became stupefied, dropped their weapons and fell unconscious to the ground from their elephants, chariots and horses. On the pretext of the procession,

Rukmiṇī displayed her beauty for Kṛṣṇa alone. Slowly she advanced the two moving lotus-whorls of her feet, awaiting the arrival of the Supreme Lord. With the fingernails of her left hand she pushed some strands of hair away from her face and shyly looked from the corners of her eyes at the kings standing before her. At that moment she saw Kṛṣṇa. Then, while His enemies looked on, the Lord seized the princess, who was eager to mount His chariot.

COMMENTARY

The demons, who were inimical to the Lord, saw Rukmiṇī, His internal potency (*cid-ānanda-mayī*) as Māyā. This is described in two and a half verses.

(51) Seeing Rukmiṇī as Kṛṣṇa's *māyā* potency, the heroes became bewildered. This is same thing that happened to the wrestlers in Mathurā (SB 10.43.17), who saw Kṛṣṇa as a thunderbolt rather than as a tender young boy. They could not perceive Kṛṣṇa's true identity. Similarly, the heroes present in Kuṇḍina were thinking that this beautiful girl Rukmiṇī was no mortal, but rather the supreme *māyā* potency, who bewilders even the demigods (*deva-māyām*).

The following verse describes a *śyāmā* (śyāmāṁ) woman:

śīta-kāle bhaved usṇo uṣṇa-kāle tu śītalā

stanau su-kaṭhinau yasyāḥ sā śyāmā parikīrtitā

"A woman is called *śyāmā* when her breasts are very firm and when someone in her presence feels warm in the winter and cool in the summer." The warriors became overcome with lust on seeing Rukmiṇī's prominent breasts, and her unsteady eyes moving about as if afraid of her locks of hair.

(52-53) Rukmiṇī's teeth were finely shaped like jasmine buds and tinted red from the reflection of her *bimba*-fruit lips. Her moving feet were beautified by the glow of her skillfully crafted, tinkling ankle bells. The warriors were tormented by the lust (*hṛt-śaya: kāmaḥ*) generated by seeing Rukmiṇī as *māyā*. This resembles Purūravā, who became afflicted by lust when he saw Urvaśī in the firey image produced by the Gandharvas. Purūravā became lusty, not by the fiery image, but the thought that it was Urvaśī.

Similarly, the heroes' lusty agitation was due to their perception of *māyā* and not due to perceiving Rukmiṇī. Nondevotees can never perceive the beautiful form of Rukmiṇī, because she is a manifestation of Kṛṣṇa's internal energy. Thus the heroic kings assembled in Vidarbha became agitated with lust upon seeing the Lord's illusory potency, an expansion of Rukmiṇī. This explanation refutes any other contrary interpretation.

(54) The warriors became so bewildered that they fainted on seeing Rukmiṇī, who had offered her beauty to Kṛṣṇa and no one else.

(55) Rukmiṇī was walking slowly (*śanaiḥ-calayatī*) because she was searching for Kṛṣṇa. Upon seeing the other men present, however, she felt shy. But she would not show such bashfulness on seeing Kṛṣṇa. Then she saw Acyuta, who, it is implied, never left (*cyuta*) her heart.

|| 10.53.56 ||

rathaṁ samāropya suparṇa-lakṣaṇaṁ

rājanya-cakraṁ paribhūya mādhavaḥ

tato yayau rāma-purogamaḥ śanaiḥ

śṛgāla-madhyād iva bhāga-hṛd dhariḥ

TRANSLATION

Lifting the princess onto His chariot, whose flag bore the emblem of Garuḍa, Lord Mādhava drove back the circle of kings. With Balarāma in the lead, He slowly exited, like a lion removing his prey from the midst of jackals.

|| 10.53.57 ||

taṁ māninaḥ svābhibhavaṁ yaśaḥ-kṣayaṁ

pare jarāsandha-mukhā na sehire

aho dhig asmān yaśa ātta-dhanvanāṁ

gopair hṛtaṁ keśariṇāṁ mṛgair iva

TRANSLATION

The kings inimical to the Lord, headed by Jarāsandha, could not tolerate this humiliating defeat. They exclaimed, "Oh, damn us! Though we are mighty archers, mere cowherds have stolen our honor, just as puny animals might steal the honor of lions!"

COMMENTARY

Finding the defeat intolerable, the angry kings abused the Yādavas, "We are unfortunate because our fame has been stolen by cowherd men."

Thus ends the commentary on the Fifty Third Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Fifty-four

Marriage of Kṛṣṇa and Rukmiṇī

|| 10.54.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

iti sarve su-saṁrabdhā vāhān āruhya daṁśitāḥ

svaiḥ svair balaiḥ parikrāntā anvīyur dhṛta-kārmukāḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having thus spoken, all those infuriated kings donned their armor and mounted their conveyances. Each king, bow in hand, was surrounded by his own army as he went after Lord Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

This chapter describes Kṛṣṇa's defeating Jarāsandha and others, the disfiguring of Rukmī, the consolation of Rukmiṇī, and the wedding of Kṛṣṇa and Rukmiṇī in Dvārakā.

|| 10.54.2 ||

tān āpatata ālokya yādavānīka-yūthapāḥ

tasthus tat-sammukhā rājan visphūrjya sva-dhanūṁṣi te

TRANSLATION

The commanders of the Yādava army, seeing the enemy racing to attack, turned to face them and stood firm, O King, twanging their bows.

COMMENTARY

Seeing the enemy pursuing them, the Yādava army turned to face them and stood firm, twanging (*visphūrjya*) their bows.

|| 10.54.3 ||

aśva-pṛṣṭhe gaja-skandhe rathopasthe 'stra kovidāḥ

mumucuḥ śara-varṣāṇi meghā adriṣv apo yathā

TRANSLATION

Mounted on the backs of horses, the shoulders of elephants and the seats of chariots, the enemy kings, expert with weapons, rained down arrows upon the Yadus like clouds pouring rain on mountains.

COMMENTARY

The shower of Jarāsandha's arrows was totally insignificant, like rain falling on a mountain.

|| 10.54.4 ||

patyur balaṁ śarāsāraiś channaṁ vīkṣya su-madhyamā

sa-vrīḍm aikṣat tad-vaktraṁ bhaya-vihvala-locanā

TRANSLATION

Slender-waisted Rukmiṇī, seeing her Lord's army covered by torrents of arrows, shyly looked at His face with fear-stricken eyes.

COMMENTARY

Rukmiṇī shyly glanced (*aikṣat:aikṣata*) at Kṛṣṇa's face.

|| 10.54.5 ||

prahasya bhagavān āha mā sma bhair vāma-locane

vinaṅkṣyaty adhunaivaitat tāvakaiḥ śātravaṁ balam

TRANSLATION

In response the Lord laughed and assured her, "Do not be afraid, beautiful-eyed one. This enemy force is about to be destroyed by your soldiers."

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa laughingly said, "You need not fear (*mā sma bhair*) because your army will defeat the enemy." To express His great affection for Rukmiṇī, Kṛṣṇa gallantly referred to His own Yādava army as "your men" (*tāvakaiḥ*), indicating that the Kṛṣṇa's entire dynasty was now the property of His beloved queen.

|| 10.54.6 ||

teṣāṁ tad-vikramaṁ vīrā gada-saṅkarṣanādayaḥ

amṛṣyamāṇā nārācair jaghnur haya-gajān rathān

TRANSLATION

The heroes of the Lord's army, headed by Gada and Saṅkarṣaṇa, could not tolerate the aggression of the opposing kings. Thus with iron arrows they began to strike down the enemy's horses, elephants and chariots.

COMMENTARY

Not being able to tolerate the enemies' show of prowess, the Yādavas destroyed their chariots and horses with arrows.

|| 10.54.7 ||

petuḥ śirāṁsi rathinām aśvināṁ gajināṁ bhuvi

sa-kuṇḍala-kirīṭāni soṣṇīṣāṇi ca koṭiśaḥ

TRANSLATION

The heads of soldiers fighting on chariots, horses and elephants fell to the ground by the millions; some heads wore earrings and helmets, others turbans.

|| 10.54.8 ||

hastāḥ sāsi-gadeṣv-āsāḥ karabhā ūravo ’ṅghrayaḥ

aśvāśvatara-nāgoṣṭra-khara-martya-śirāṁsi ca

TRANSLATION

Lying all around were thighs, legs and fingerless hands, along with hands clutching swords, clubs and bows, and also the heads of horses, donkeys, elephants, camels, wild asses and humans.

COMMENTARY

Karabhāḥ is defined in the *Amara-kośa* dictionary: “The portion of the hand from the wrist to the base of the fingers.” The same word may also indicate an elephant’s trunk, and thus in this verse the implication is that the thighs lying on the battlefield resembled the trunks of elephants.

|| 10.54.9 ||

hanyamāna-balānīkā vṛṣṇibhir jaya-kāṅkṣibhiḥ

rājāno vimukhā jagmur jarāsandha-puraḥ-sarāḥ

TRANSLATION

Seeing their armies being struck down by the Vṛṣṇis, who were eager for victory, the kings headed by Jarāsandha were discouraged and left the battlefield.

|| 10.54.10 ||

śiśupālaṁ samabhyetya hṛta-dāram ivāturam

naṣṭa-tviṣaṁ gatotsāhaṁ śuṣyad-vadanam abruvan

TRANSLATION

The kings approached Śiśupāla, who was disturbed like a man who has lost his wife. His complexion was drained of color, his enthusiasm was gone, and his face appeared dried up. The kings spoke to him as follows.

|| 10.54.11 ||

bho bhoḥ puruṣa-śārdūla daurmanasyam idaṁ tyaja

na priyāpriyayo rājan niṣṭhā dehiṣu dṛśyate

TRANSLATION

[Jarāsandha said:] Listen, Śiśupāla, O tiger among men, give up your depression. After all, embodied beings' happiness and unhappiness is never seen to be permanent, O King.

COMMENTARY

One does not see any permanence (*niṣṭhā*) of happiness and distress.

|| 10.54.12 ||

yathā dāru-mayī yoṣit nṛtyate kuhakecchayā

evam īśvara-tantro 'yam īhate sukha-duḥkhayoḥ

TRANSLATION

Just as a puppet in the form of a woman dances by the desire of the puppeteer, so this world, controlled by the Supreme Lord, struggles in both happiness and misery.

COMMENTARY

Just as puppets are controlled by the puppeteer (*kuhaka*), so the living entities receive happiness and distress under the direction of the Lord. Thus we see that even though the demons accept the power of God, they are demoniac because of being inimical to Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.54.13 ||

śaureḥ sapta-daśāhaṁ vai saṁyugāni parājitaḥ

trayo-viṁśatibhiḥ sainyair jigye ekam ahaṁ param

TRANSLATION

In battle with Kṛṣṇa I and my twenty-three armies lost seventeen times; only once did I defeat Him.

COMMENTARY

Jarāsandha said, “I have been defeated in seventeen battles with Kṛṣṇa using twenty-three armies. Finally in one battle I was victorious.”

|| 10.54.14 ||

tathāpy ahaṁ na śocāmi na prahṛṣyāmi karhicit

kālena daiva-yuktena jānan vidrāvitaṁ jagat

TRANSLATION

But still I never lament or rejoice, because I know this world is driven by time and fate.

COMMENTARY

Under the direction of fate, time moves and agitates everyone in this world.

|| 10.54.15 ||

adhunāpi vayaṁ sarve vīra-yūthapa-yūthapāḥ

parājitāḥ phalgu-tantrair yadubhiḥ kṛṣṇa-pālitaiḥ

TRANSLATION

And now all of us, great commanders of military leaders, have been defeated by the Yadus and their small entourage, who are protected by Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

Jarāsandha said, “I was defeated by the meager entourage (*phalgu-tantraiḥ*) of the Yadus.”

|| 10.54.16 ||

ripavo jigyur adhunā kāla ātmānusāriṇi

tadā vayaṁ vijeṣyāmo yadā kālaḥ pradakṣiṇaḥ

TRANSLATION

Now our enemies have conquered because time favors them, but in the future, when time is auspicious for us, we shall conquer.

COMMENTARY

Jarāsandha said, “When time becomes favorable (*pradaksinaḥ: anukūlaḥ*) to us, then we win.”

|| 10.54.17 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

evaṁ prabodhito mitraiś caidyo ’gāt sānugaḥ puram

hata-śeṣāḥ punas te ’pi yayuḥ svaṁ svaṁ puraṁ nṛpāḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus persuaded by his friends, Śiśupāla took his followers and went back to his capital. The surviving warriors also returned to their respective cities.

|| 10.54.18 ||

rukmī tu rākṣasodvāhaṁ kṛṣṇa-dviḍ asahan svasuḥ

pṛṣṭhato ’nvagamat kṛṣṇam akṣauhiṇyā vṛto balī

TRANSLATION

Powerful Rukmī, however, was especially envious of Kṛṣṇa. He could not bear the fact that Kṛṣṇa had carried off his sister to marry her in the Rākṣasa style. Thus he pursued the Lord with an entire military division.

|| 10.54.19-20 ||

rukmy amarṣī su-saṁrabdhaḥ śṛṇvatāṁ sarva-bhūbhujām

pratijajñe mahā-bāhur daṁśitaḥ sa-śarāsanaḥ

ahatvā samare kṛṣṇam apratyūhya ca rukmiṇīm

kuṇḍinaṁ na pravekṣyāmi satyam etad bravīmi vaḥ

TRANSLATION

Frustrated and enraged, mighty-armed Rukmī, dressed in armor and wielding his bow, had sworn before all the kings, “I shall not again enter Kuṇḍina if I do not kill Kṛṣṇa in battle and bring Rukmiṇī back with me. I swear this to you.”

COMMENTARY

Rukmī, being intolerant (*amarṣī*) and very angry (*su-saṁrabdhaḥ*), took up his bow and said, “I will not enter Kuṇḍina without killing Kṛṣṇa and bringing back Rukmiṇī.” Bhāratī (goddess Sarasvatī) gives the following meaning: Rukmī said, “I will not enter Kuṇḍina because I do not understand (*ahatvā:ajñātvā*) Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, I will not try to stop Him or free (*apratyūhya:anirmocya*) Rukmiṇī.”

|| 10.54.21 ||

ity uktvā ratham āruhya sārathiṁ prāha satvaraḥ

codayāśvān yataḥ kṛṣṇaḥ tasya me saṁyugaṁ bhavet

TRANSLATION

Having said this, he had mounted his chariot and told his charioteer, "Drive the horses quickly to where Kṛṣṇa is. He and I must fight."

|| 10.54.22 ||

adyāhaṁ niśitair bāṇair gopālasya su-durmateḥ

neṣye vīrya-madaṁ yena svasā me prasabhaṁ hṛtā

TRANSLATION

"This wicked-minded cowherd boy, infatuated with His prowess, has violently abducted my sister. But today I will remove His pride with my sharp arrows."

COMMENTARY

Rukmī said, "Today with my sharp arrows I will remove (*neṣye*) the heroic pride of that stupid cowherd boy who has forcibly abducted my sister." From the viewpoint of goddess Sarasvatī the meaning is: "Today the intoxication of pride I have in my own prowess will be removed by the sharp arrows of the cowherd boy whose beautiful mind is compassionate even toward the wicked (*durmateḥ*)."

|| 10.54.23 ||

vikatthamānaḥ kumatir īśvarasyāpramāṇa-vit

rathenaikena govindaṁ tiṣṭha tiṣṭhety athāhvayat

TRANSLATION

Boasting thus, foolish Rukmī, ignorant of the true extent of the Supreme Lord's power, approached Lord Govinda in his lone chariot and challenged Him, "Just stand and fight!"

|| 10.54.24 ||

dhanur vikṛṣya su-dṛḍhaṁ jaghne kṛṣṇaṁ tribhiḥ śaraiḥ

āha cātra kṣaṇaṁ tiṣṭha yadūnāṁ kula-pāṁsana

TRANSLATION

Rukmī drew his bow with great strength and struck Lord Kṛṣṇa with three arrows. Then he said, "Stand here for a moment, O defiler of the Yadu dynasty!"

COMMENTARY

Kula-pāṁsana can mean "O defiler of Your dynasty." But according to the inspiration of Sarasvatī, *kula-pāṁsana* may be understood as a combination of the words *kula-pa*, "O protector of the Yadu dynasty," and *aṁsana*, "O expert killer of enemies." *Ātra kṣaṇaṁ tiṣṭha* can mean "Stand here a moment." It can also mean: *ara iksanam tistha*, "Stand so that I may glance upon You."

|| 10.54.25 ||

yatra yāsi svasāraṁ me muṣitvā dhvāṅkṣa-vad dhaviḥ

hariṣye 'dya madaṁ manda māyinaḥ kūṭa-yodhinaḥ

TRANSLATION

"Wherever You go, carrying off my sister like a crow stealing sacrificial butter, I will follow. This very day I shall relieve You of Your false pride, You fool, You deceiver, You cheater in battle!"

COMMENTARY

Rukmī said, "You are taking my sister, just like a crow (*dhvāṅkṣa-vat*) steals a sacrificial offering. Today (*adya*), oh fool, I will take away Your pride in being a false warrior and cheater."

The other meaning is: "Since my sister is Mahālaksmī and thus belongs to You, whether You steal her or not, wherever You go she is Your own essence (*sva sāraṁ*). After releasing my sister from You, I will bring her back to my house, just as a crow steals the sacrificial butter (*haviḥ*). Please break the pride of this false warrior, myself, who is a fool (*manda*) and a cheater (*māyī*)."

The *Medinī* dictionary says that *haviḥ* means ghee or a sacrificial offering. In both usages the word is neuter.

|| 10.54.26 ||

yāvan na me hato bāṇaiḥ śayīthā muñca dārīkām

smayan kṛṣṇo dhanuś chittvā ṣaḍbhir vivyādha rukmiṇam

TRANSLATION

"Release the girl before You are struck dead by my arrows and made to lie down!" In response to this, Lord Kṛṣṇa smiled, and with six arrows He struck Rukmī and broke his bow.

COMMENTARY

Rukmī said, "Release this girl before You lie on the battlefield, having been killed (*me hataḥ*) by my arrows." The other meaning is: "Because You are not killed by my arrows (*me ahataḥ*), do not release the girl."

Kṛṣṇa said, "Why should I keep this girl?"

Rukmī: "So You can lie down (*sayīthāḥ*)." Although Rukmī did not say it, the sentence becomes complete with the phrase, "with her on a bed of flowers." In fact Kṛṣṇa was meant to lie down with Rukmiṇī on a beautiful bed of flowers, but out of shyness Rukmī did not directly mention it.

|| 10.54.27 ||

aṣṭabhiś caturo vāhān dvābhyāṁ sūtaṁ dhvajaṁ tribhiḥ

sa cānyad dhanur ādhāya kṛṣṇaṁ vivyādha pañcabhiḥ

TRANSLATION

The Lord struck Rukmī's four horses with eight arrows, his chariot driver with two, and the chariot's flag with three. Rukmī grabbed another bow and struck Lord Kṛṣṇa with five arrows.

|| 10.54.28 ||

tais tāditaḥ śaraughais tu ciccheda dhanur acyutaḥ

punar anyad upādatta tad apy acchinad avyayaḥ

TRANSLATION

Although hit by these many arrows, Lord Acyuta again broke Rukmī's bow. Rukmī picked up yet another bow, but the infallible Lord broke that one to pieces as well.

|| 10.54.29 ||

parighaṁ paṭṭiśaṁ śūlaṁ carmāsī śakti-tomarau

yad yad āyudham ādatta tat sarvaṁ so 'cchinad dhariḥ

TRANSLATION

Iron bludgeon, three-pointed spear, sword and shield, pike, javelin—whatever weapon Rukmī picked up, Lord Hari smashed it to bits.

|| 10.54.30 ||

tato rathād avaplutya khaḍga-pāṇir jighāṁsayā

kṛṣṇam abhyadravat kruddhaḥ pataṅga iva pāvakam

TRANSLATION

Then Rukmī leaped down from his chariot and, sword in hand, rushed furiously toward Kṛṣṇa to kill Him, like a bird flying into the wind.

|| 10.54.31 ||

tasya cāpatataḥ khaḍgaṁ tilaśaś carma ceṣubhiḥ

chittvāsim ādade tigmaṁ rukmiṇaṁ hantum udyataḥ

TRANSLATION

As Rukmī attacked Him, the Lord shot arrows that broke Rukmī's sword and shield into small pieces. Kṛṣṇa then took up His own sharp sword and prepared to kill Rukmī.

|| 10.54.32 ||

dṛṣṭvā bhrātṛ-vadhodyogaṁ rukmiṇī bhaya-vihvalā

patitvā pādayor bhartur uvāca karuṇaṁ satī

TRANSLATION

Seeing Lord Kṛṣṇa ready to kill her brother, saintly Rukmiṇī was filled with alarm. She fell at her husband's feet and piteously spoke as follows.

COMMENTARY

Rukmiṇī thought, "What will people think if they know that my brother was killed before my eyes?" She was filled with fear because of this, not out of affection for her brother. The *prema* of the queens of Dvārakā, known as *samañjasā-prema* (proper love), is dependent on public opinion, whereas the *prema* of the Vraja-gopīs, known as *samarthā-prema*, is much stronger because it is not dependent at all on the opinion of the public.

However, one should not think that the general characteristic of *prema*, namely exclusive possessiveness of Viṣṇu in a loving relationship, is lacking in Rukmiṇī, since within herself she actually had no affection at all for Rukmī and other demons like him. This will be described later in detail. Exclusive possessiveness is explained in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta sindhu* IV 2.2:

> *ananya-mamatā viṣṇau, mamatā prema-saṅgatā*
>
> *bhaktir ity ucyate bhīṣma, prahlādoddhava-nāradaiḥ*

> "When one is completely apathetic to all other objects, and has developed an exclusive sense of ownership or possessive-ness in relation to Lord Viṣṇu, thinking of Viṣṇu and no one else as His object of love, such an awakening is called *prema-bhakti* by Bhīṣma, Prahlāda, Uddhava and Nārada."

|| 10.54.33 ||

śrī-rukmiṇy uvāca

yogeśvarāprameyātman deva-deva jagat-pate

hantuṁ nārhasi kalyāṇa bhrātaraṁ me mahā-bhuja

TRANSLATION

Śrī Rukmiṇī said: O controller of all mystic power, immeasurable one, Lord of lords, master of the universe! O all auspicious and mighty-armed one, please do not kill my brother!

COMMENTARY

Rukmiṇī said, "You possess inconceivably great transcendental opulences, while Rukmī is the most insignificant of those who are controlled by You. You are the immeasurable one (*aprameyātma*) and he is like an insect among the limited. You are supreme among the demigods (*deva-deva*), and he is the lowest among humans because he is inimical to You. You are the protector of the universe (*jagat-pate*), and though he is evil, because he is within the universe, he is to be protected. Therefore O auspicious one (*kalyāṇa*) with mighty arms (*mahā-bhuja*), You should not kill this inauspicious person with no power in his arms."

|| 10.54.34 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

tayā paritrāsa-vikampitāṅgayā śucāvaśuṣyan-mukha-ruddha-kaṇṭhayā

kātarya-visraṁsita-hema-mālayā gṛhīta-pādaḥ karuṇo nyavartata

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Rukmiṇī's utter fear caused her limbs to tremble and her mouth to dry up, while her throat choked up out of sorrow. And in her agitation her golden necklace scattered. She grasped Kṛṣṇa's feet, and the Lord, feeling compassionate, desisted.

COMMENTARY

Out of fear of the "worldly rule" that one's sister is the personification of mercy (*dayāyā bhaginī mūrtiḥ*), Rukmiṇī was compassionate toward Rukmī, even though Rukmī was wicked, opposed to her, and would have been the cause of her giving up her life if she had been forced to marry Śiśupāla. Kṛṣṇa shared Rukmiṇī's compassion.

|| 10.54.35 ||

cailena baddhvā tam asādhu-kārīṇaṁ sa-śmaśru-keśaṁ pravapan vyarūpayat

tāvan mamarduḥ para-sainyam adbhutaṁ yadu-pravīrā nalinīṁ yathā gajāḥ

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa tied up the evil-doer with a strip of cloth. He then proceeded to disfigure Rukmī by comically shaving him, leaving parts of his mustache and hair. By that time the Yadu heroes had crushed the extraordinary army of their opponents, just as elephants crush a lotus flower.

COMMENTARY

“Rukmī should never come and do mischief again.” Thinking thus, Kṛṣṇa showed his contempt for Rukmī by marking his body with some ugly features to let him remember his defeat and dissolve his pride. Kṛṣṇa tied him up by the neck with a strip of cloth using His left hand. While holding up the two ends of that cloth, Kṛṣṇa took His sword in His right hand, knocked off Rukmi’s turban, and then shaved off bits of his moustache, beard and hair at the root, drawing blood. With scraps of hair remaining here and there Rukmī looked completely disfigured.

|| 10.54.36 ||

kṛṣṇāntikam upavrajya dadṛśus tatra rukmiṇam

tathā-bhūtaṁ hata-prāyaṁ dṛṣṭvā saṅkarṣaṇo vibhuḥ

vimucya baddhaṁ karuṇo bhagavān kṛṣṇam abravīt

TRANSLATION

As the Yadus approached Lord Kṛṣṇa, they saw Rukmī in this sorry condition, practically dying of shame. When the all-powerful Lord Balarāma saw Rukmī, He compassionately released him and spoke the following to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

Out of compassion, Balarāma took the cloth that Kṛṣṇa was holding in His left hand and released Rukmī from the noose.

|| 10.54.37 ||

asādhv idaṁ tvayā kṛṣṇa kṛtam asmaj-jugupsitam

vapanaṁ śmaśru-keśānāṁ vairūpyaṁ suhṛdo vadhaḥ

TRANSLATION

[Lord Balarāma said:] My dear Kṛṣṇa, You have acted improperly! This deed will bring shame on Us, for to disfigure a close relative by shaving off his mustache and hair is as good as killing him.

COMMENTARY

Balarāma said, “Death itself would have been more proper than shaving him with Your sword, which has made his face ghastly.” Balarāma gently reproached Kṛṣṇa in order to console the lamenting Rukmiṇī. Internally, however, Balarāma was thinking, “O most clever brother, You have done what is proper and acted quite rightly.”

Thus expressing satisfaction, Balarāma spoke this verse. Though Rukmī is factually a *duḥṛt* (an enemy, not a friend), in this verse Balarāma sarcastically calls him *suḥṛt*, which means a well-wisher, friend or a brother-in-law.

|| 10.54.38 ||

maivāsmān sādhvy asūyethā bhrātur vairūpya-cintayā

sukha-duḥkha-do na cānyo ’sti yataḥ sva-kṛta-bhuk pumān

TRANSLATION

Saintly lady, please do not be displeased with Us out of anxiety for your brother’s disfigurement. No one but oneself is responsible for one’s joy and grief, for a man experiences the result of his own deeds.

COMMENTARY

To dispel Rukmiṇī’s sadness, Balarāma reasons with her in this verse: “Everyone must enjoy or suffer the results of his acts. What is this useless affection for this most wicked person who acts against your own husband?” Balarāma gently scolded Rukmiṇī.

|| 10.54.39 ||

bandhur vadhārha-doṣo ’pi na bandhor vadham arhati

tyājyaḥ svenaiva doṣeṇa hataḥ kiṁ hanyate punaḥ

TRANSLATION

[Again addressing Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma said:] A relative should not be killed even if his wrongdoing warrants capital punishment. Rather, he should be thrown out of the family. Since he has already been killed by his own sin, why kill him again?

COMMENTARY

In order to satisfy Rukmiṇī, Balarāma instructs Kṛṣṇa in morality in this verse: "A relative should not be killed by a relative, and a brother-in-law should not be killed by the sister's husband."

|| 10.54.40 ||

kṣatriyāṇām ayaṁ dharmaḥ prajāpati-vinirmitaḥ

bhrātāpi bhrātaraṁ hanyād yena ghoratamas tataḥ

TRANSLATION

[Turning to Rukmiṇī, Balarāma continued:] The code of sacred duty for warriors established by Lord Brahmā enjoins that one may have to kill even his own brother. That is indeed a most dreadful law.

COMMENTARY

Balarāma speaks again to Rukmiṇī, who was saying in her mind, "Your younger brother does not know this rule." Balarāma said, "The scriptures order that one should even kill one's brother. What to speak then of a brother-in-law who is so vile?"

|| 10.54.41 ||

rājyasya bhūmer vittasya striyo mānasya tejasaḥ

mānino 'nyasya vā hetoḥ śrī-madāndhāḥ kṣipanti hi

TRANSLATION

[Again Balarāma addressed Kṛṣṇa:] Blinded by conceit with their personal opulences, proud men offend others for the sake of such things as kingdom, land, wealth, women, honor and power.

COMMENTARY

“But,” Rukmiṇī is thinking to herself, “A kṣatriya may have to kill his relative, but he should not disfigure him in such a ghastly way.” To satisfy her, Balarāma then spoke to Kṛṣṇa: “O Kṛṣṇa! Proud fellows abuse others in order to get land, money and power. But We should not do this.”

|| 10.54.42 ||

taveyaṁ viṣamā buddhiḥ sarva-bhūteṣu durhṛdām

yan manyase sadābhadraṁ suhṛdāṁ bhadram ajña-vat

TRANSLATION

[To Rukmiṇī Balarāma said:] Your attitude is unfair, for like an ignorant person you wish good to those who are inimical to all living beings and who have done evil to your true well-wishers.

COMMENTARY

“But this rule is for situations other than war. In war, however, the rule is that the enemy should be defeated and made insignificant.” Guessing that this was Kṛṣṇa’s internal thought, Balarāma then spoke this verse to Rukmiṇī: “The good done by Kṛṣṇa to your own well-wishers and family members such as Rukmī, namely shaving his hair, that you think is bad is an unfair attitude on your part. This is the biased attitude of you, who are nonetheless wise.”

|| 10.54.43 ||

ātma-moho nṛṇāṁ eva kalpate deva-māyayā

suhṛd durhṛd udāsīna iti dehātma-māninām

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord’s Māyā makes men forget their real selves, and thus, taking the body for the self, they consider others to be friends, enemies or neutral parties.

COMMENTARY

“I know quite well that my brother is evil, but still I have some attachment as a relative. What can I do?” If Rukmiṇī asks this, Balarāma answers: “Certainly for an elevated person like you such bad judgment is not proper. But for worldly people this is their natural tendency. For those who think that their bodies are them-selves, there is such bewilderment, but not for those in knowledge.”

|| 10.54.44 ||

eka eva paro hy ātmā sarveṣām api dehinām

nāneva gṛhyate mūḍhair yathā jyotir yathā nabhaḥ

TRANSLATION

Those who are bewildered perceive the one Supreme Soul, who resides in all embodied beings, as many, just as one may perceive the light in the sky, or the sky itself, as many.

COMMENTARY

In two verses Balarāma refutes the misconception of those who think the body is the self. First He states that the body is not the Supersoul. The Supreme Soul is certainly the only mover of the embodied souls. Two examples are given to show that one is the basis of many. It is like fire within wood and ether in a pot. The *Srīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.32) gives a similar analogy concerning fire and wood:

> *yathā hy avahito vahnir dāruṣv ekaḥ sva-yoniṣu*
>
> *nāneva bhāti viśvātmā bhūteṣu ca tathā pumān*
>
> “The Lord, as the Supersoul, pervades all things, just as fire permeates wood, and so He appears to be of many varieties, though He is the absolute one without a second.”

|| 10.54.45 ||

deha ādy-antavān eṣa dravya-prāṇa-guṇātmakaḥ

ātmany avidyayā kÿptaḥ saṁsārayati dehinam

TRANSLATION

This material body, which has a beginning and an end, is composed of the physical elements, the senses and the modes of nature. The body, imposed on the self by material ignorance, causes one to experience the cycle of birth and death.

COMMENTARY

In this verse Balarāma also explains that the body is not the soul: “This body, which you think is to be protected because he is a relative, or to be killed because he is an enemy, consists of three aspects: the physical elements (*dravya:adhibhūta*), the senses (*prāṇa:adhyātma*) and the modes of nature (*guṇa:adhidaivam*). It is produced for the soul (*ātmani:jīva*) by ignorance and makes the soul rotate in the cycle of birth and death under the control of attraction and repulsion.”

|| 10.54.46 ||

nātmano ’nyena saṁyogo viyogaś casataḥ sati

tad-dhetutvāt tat-prasiddher dṛg-rūpābhyāṁ yathā raveḥ

TRANSLATION

O intelligent lady, the soul never undergoes contact with or separation from insubstantial, material objects, because the soul is their very origin and illuminator. Thus the soul resembles the sun, which neither comes in contact with nor separates from the sense of sight and what is seen.

COMMENTARY

Balarāma said, “Because the soul is tainted by contact with the body, the body appears to be the self. Actually however, there is never any contact of the soul with the body. Neither the Supersoul nor the individual soul have any contact with the body.”

First this verse can be explained as referring to the soul (*jīvātmā*) and matter. There is no contact of the soul with the material body which is impermanent, having a beginning and end. Because there is no contact there is no separation. How does this take place?

“The soul is the cause of matter assembling itself into a material body. Although the soul (*jīvātmā*) manifests the material body, it is not contaminated by it. How can the producer be contaminated by that which it manifests?”

The explanation is then given in regard to the Supersoul, Paramātmā. The Paramātmā (*ātmano*) has no contact with the individual soul (*anyena:jīva*) or his impermanent body (*asataḥ*) because the Paramātmā is the source of the *jīva* and his body by His very nature as God. Therefore, the Paramātmā is never contaminated by either the *jīva* or the body manifested from Him. The producer is never touched by that which is manifested from it.

The example of the sun applies in both cases. For the sun, situated in one place, there is no contact with the eye or the visible form manifested by that eye, which are both made manifest by itself. In this context the sun represents the Paramātmā, the sense of sight represents the *jīva* and the body represents visible form.

|| 10.54.47 ||

janmādayas tu dehasya vikriyā nātmanaḥ kvacit

kalānām iva naivendor mṛtir hy asya kuhūr iva

TRANSLATION

Birth and other transformations are undergone by the body but never by the self, just as change occurs for the moon's phases but never for the moon, though the new-moon day may be called the moon's "death."

COMMENTARY

The soul has no connection with the body because it also has no birth or death. Balarāma states this in this verse. Then how does the self experience "I am born, I am a child, I am an old man?" This is explained with an example. Just as there is birth for the moon's phases, but not for the moon itself, similarly, due to the demise of phases, kuhū or the new moon day (*amāvasyā*) is called the "death" of the moon. In the same way, when the material body is destroyed the term "death" is conventionally applied to the self.

|| 10.54.48 ||

yathā śayāna ātmānaṁ viṣayān phalam eva ca

anubhuṅkte 'py asaty arthe tathāpnoty abudho bhavam

TRANSLATION

As a sleeping person perceives himself, the objects of sense enjoyment and the fruits of his acts within the illusion of a dream, so one who is unintelligent undergoes material existence.

COMMENTARY

From the *śruti* statement, *asaṅgo hy ayaṁ puruṣaḥ*: "The living being has no intimate connection with the material world," it is understood that the self is never in contact with the body. But by the inconceivable potency of ignorance he imagines his connection with the body and experiences material life.

This is exemplified by an analogy in this verse. Although present within something which is unreal, a person who is dreaming experiences himself conquering countries with a vast army, and enjoying the fruits of victory such as garlands, sandalwood paste and beautiful women. Sometimes he also experiences defeat, bondage, beating and abuse. In the same way, the unintelligent person experiences in an unreal way the world of happiness and distress due to his association with the material body.

A similar statement is found in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.22.56):

> *arthe 'hy avidyamāne 'pi saṁsṛtir na nivartate*
>
> *dhyāyato viṣayān asya svapne 'narthāgamo yathā*
>
> "Although material life has no factual existence, it does not go away for one who is meditating on sense enjoyment, just as the unpleasant experiences of a dream do not disappear."

|| 10.54.49 ||

tasmād ajñāna-jaṁ śokam ātma-śoṣa-vimohanam

tattva-jñānena nirhṛtya sva-sthā bhava śuci-smite

TRANSLATION

Therefore, with transcendental knowledge dispel the grief that is weakening and confounding your mind. Please resume your natural mood, O princess of the pristine smile.

COMMENTARY

Balarāma said, “Because this is so, please become well-composed and resume your natural mood (*sva-sthā:svabhāva-sthā*). Please smile and show the natural blossoming of your face, rather than grieving like an ordinary material bride.”

|| 10.54.50 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

evaṁ bhagavatā tanvī rāmeṇa pratibodhitā

vaimanasyaṁ parityajya mano buddhyā samādadhe

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus enlightened by Lord Balarāma, slender Rukmiṇī forgot her depression and steadied her mind by spiritual intelligence.

COMMENTARY

Rukmiṇī composed herself by giving up the depression (*vaima-nasyam: cintām*) of thinking, “What will people say about me?”

|| 10.54.51 ||

prāṇāvaśeṣa utsṛṣṭo dviḍbhir hata-bala-prabhaḥ

smaran virūpa-karaṇaṁ vitathātma-manorathaḥ

cakre bhojakaṭaṁ nāma nivāsāya mahat puram

TRANSLATION

Left with only his life air, cast out by his enemies and deprived of his strength and bodily radiance, Rukmī could not forget how he had been disfigured. In frustration he constructed for his residence a large city, which he called Bhojakaṭa.

COMMENTARY

“Expelled by his enemies” (*utsṛṣṭo dviḍbhir*) means that Rukmī was insulted by the Yadu soldiers with abuses, curses and chastisement as he walked away from Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.54.52 ||

ahatvā durmatiṁ kṛṣṇam apratyūhya yavīyasīm

kuṇḍinaṁ na pravekṣyāmīty uktvā tatrāvasad ruṣā

TRANSLATION

Because he had promised “I will not reenter Kuṇḍina until I have killed wicked Kṛṣṇa and brought back my younger sister,” in a mood of angry frustration Rukmī took up residence at that very place.

COMMENTARY

Rukmī constructed a large city which he named Bhojakaṭa (verse 51). According to the *Nānārtha-varga* dictionary, the word *bhoja* means “experience” and the word *kaṭaḥ* means “vow.” Thus Bhojakaṭa is the place where Rukmī experienced misery as a result of his vow to offer Rukmiṇī to Śiśupāla.

|| 10.54.53 ||

bhagavān bhīṣmaka-sutām evaṁ nirjitya bhūmi-pān

puram ānīya vidhi-vad upayeme kurūdvaha

TRANSLATION

Thus defeating all the opposing kings, the Supreme Personality of Godhead brought the daughter of Bhīṣmaka to His capital and married her according to the Vedic injunctions, O protector of the Kurus.

|| 10.54.54 ||

tadā mahotsavo nṝṇāṁ yadu-puryāṁ gṛhe gṛhe

abhūd ananya-bhāvānāṁ kṛṣṇe yadu-patau nṛpa

TRANSLATION

At that time, O King, there was great rejoicing in all the homes of Yadupurī, whose citizens loved only Kṛṣṇa, chief of the Yadus.

COMMENTARY

The Dvārakāvāsīs, who had exclusive love (*ananya-bhāvānāṁ*) for Kṛṣṇa, began celebrating.

|| 10.54.55 ||

narā nāryaś ca muditāḥ pramṛṣṭa-maṇi-kuṇḍalāḥ

pāribarham upājahrur varayoś citra-vāsasoḥ

TRANSLATION

All the men and women, full of joy and adorned with shining jewels and earrings, brought wedding presents, which they reverently offered to the exquisitely dressed groom and bride.

COMMENTARY

They offered worthy gifts such as household utensils to the bride and groom (*varayoḥ*).

|| 10.54.56 ||

sā vṛṣṇi-pury uttambhitendra-ketubhir vicitra-mālyāmbara-ratna-toraṇaiḥ

babhau prati-dvāry upakḷpta-maṅgalair āpūrṇa-kumbhāguru-dhūpa-dīpakaiḥ

TRANSLATION

The city of the Vṛṣṇis appeared most beautiful: there were tall, festive columns, and also archways decorated with flower garlands, cloth banners and precious gems. Arrangements of auspicious, full waterpots, aguru-scented incense, and lamps graced every doorway.

COMMENTARY

There were tall flag poles erected in the city which appeared like architectural columns. They are called *indra-ketubhir* because the banners attached to them reached upward to the city of Lord Indra.

|| 10.54.57 ||

sikta-mārgā mada-cyudbhir āhūta-preṣṭha-bhūbhujām

gajair dvāḥsu parāmṛṣṭa-rambhā-pūgopaśobhitā

TRANSLATION

The city's streets were cleansed by the intoxicated elephants belonging to the beloved kings who were guests at the wedding, and these elephants further enhanced the beauty of the city by placing trunks of plantain and betel-nut trees in all the doorways.

COMMENTARY

The streets were sprinkled with the *mada* from the elephants of the friendly kings attending the wedding. The doorways were ornamented with tall banana and betel-nut trees.

|| 10.54.58 ||

kuru-sṛñjaya-kaikeya-vidarbha-yadu-kuntayaḥ

mitho mumudire tasmin sambhramāt paridhāvatām

TRANSLATION

Those who belonged to the royal families of the Kuru, Sṛñjaya, Kai-keya, Vidarbha, Yadu and Kunti clans joyfully met one another in the midst of the crowds of people excitedly running here and there.

COMMENTARY

Gathering together (*paridhāvatām*) they rejoiced

|| 10.54.59 ||

rukmiṇyā haraṇaṁ śrutvā gīyamānaṁ tatas tataḥ

rājāno rāja-kanyāś ca babhūvur bhṛśa-vismitāḥ

TRANSLATION

The kings and their daughters were totally astonished to hear the story of Rukmiṇī's abduction, which was being glorified in song everywhere.

|| 10.54.60 ||

dvārakāyām abhūd rājan mahā-modaḥ puraukasām

rukmiṇyā ramayopetaṁ dṛṣṭvā kṛṣṇaṁ śriyaḥ patim

TRANSLATION

Dvārakā's citizens were overjoyed to see Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of all opulence, united with Rukmiṇī, the goddess of fortune.

Thus ends the commentary on the Fifty Fourth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Fifty-five

The History of Pradyumna

|| 10.55.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

kāmas tu vāsudevāṁśo dagdhaḥ prāg rudra-manyunā

dehopapattaye bhūyas tam eva pratyapadyata

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Kāmadeva [Cupid], an expansion of Vāsudeva, had previously been burned to ashes by Rudra's anger. Now, to obtain a new body, he merged back into the body of Lord Vāsudeva.

COMMENTARY

In this chapter, Pradyumna, the son of Rukmiṇī, is stolen by Śambara. Later Pradyumna kills him and returns with His wife. We should understand the sequence of events to be that Pradyumna was born prior to Kṛṣṇa's marriages to Jāmbavatī and the other queens. Then the marriages took place, and after that Pradyumna returned home. In this context, however, while the birth of Pradyumna is being described all of His activities are also recounted, since they deserve being related.

It is seen that when the eternal associates of the Supreme Lord (*svayaṁ bhagavān*) appear in this world, by the Lord's own desire they assume the reputations of the

opulent potencies (*vibhūtis*) Kṛṣṇa contains within Himself, rather than appearing according to their own reputations. This is done so that the materialistic men do not raise doubts and in order to protect the confidential nature of *bhakti*. This is stated by Kṛṣṇa Himself to Uddhava in the Eleventh Canto: *parokṣa-vādā ṛṣayaḥ parokṣam mama ca priyam*, "The Vedic seers and *mantras* deal in esoteric terms, and I also am pleased by such confidential descriptions." (SB 11.21.35)

In this way the Vasu named Droṇa (Kṛṣṇa's *vibhuti*) was merged into Nanda and Droṇa's wife Dharā merged into Yaśodā; the demigod named Vasu became Uddhava; Indra became Arjuna; Yamarāja became Vidura and Kārtikeya became Sāmba. Even the Supreme Lord Himself appears through the celebrity of His plenary portions (*aṁśas*), which actually merge within Him when He appears. For example, sometimes the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha comes and takes birth in the home of Vasudeva, and sometimes it is Lord Vāmana, or sometimes Ṛsi Nārāyaṇa or Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu.

In this way Pradyumna, who is the third member of Kṛṣṇa's eternal fourfold plenary expansion, the *catur-vyūha*, appeared according to the reputation of the mundane Cupid (Kāmadeva), who is contained within Himself (Pradyumna) and is an expansion of His own opulence as stated in this verse.

This verse describes Kāmadeva as an expansion or *vibhūti* of Kṛṣṇa or Vāsudeva (*vāsudevāṁśo*). In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Kṛṣṇa confirms that He is Kāmadeva: *prajanas cāsmi kandarpaḥ*, "Of progenitors I am Kandarpa (Cupid)." (BG 10.28) Kāmadeva attained another body by entering into the body of Pradyumna. This he attained, not by his own powers, but by the will of the Lord, the ocean of variegated pastimes.

|| 10.55.2 ||

sa eva jāto vaidarbhyāṁ kṛṣṇa-vīrya-samudbhavaḥ

pradyumna iti vikhyātaḥ sarvato 'navamaḥ pituḥ

TRANSLATION

He took birth in the womb of Vaidarbhī from the seed of Lord Kṛṣṇa and received the name Pradyumna. In no respect was He inferior to His father.

COMMENTARY

Kāmadeva thus became famous as Pradyumna. Actually Pradyumna is part of the *catur-vyūha* with a spiritual *sac-cid-ānanda* body, whereas Kāmadeva is just a *jīva* (conditioned soul) with special powers. The *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* (2.40) confirms this point:

yatrāsau saṁsthitaḥ kṛṣṇas tribhiḥ śaktyā samāhitaḥ

rāmāniruddha-pradyumnai rukmiṇyā sahito vibhuḥ

"In Dvārakā, the almighty Śrī Kṛṣṇa, endowed with His full potency, resided in the company of His three plenary expansions— Balarāma, Aniruddha and Pradyumna."

This is also stated by Nārada Muni in the *mantra* recited by him in the First Canto (SB 1.5.37):

oṁ namo bhagavate tubhyaṁ, vāsudevāya dhīmahi

pradyumnāyāniruddhāya, namaḥ sankarṣaṇāya ca

"Let us all chant the glories of Vāsudeva along with His ple-nary expansions Pradyumna, Aniruddha and Saṅkarṣaṇa."

The present verse mentions that Pradyumna was not less than his father Kṛṣṇa in any way (*sarvataḥ-anavamaḥ-pituḥ*). The mundane Cupid (Kāmadeva), the servant of Indra, can never be described in this way. Thus the proper explanation should be that he (Cupid) entered within Pradyumna by the will of the Lord and became situated there, just as the universe is situated within Kṛṣṇa, or as Droṇa merged with Nanda Mahārāja.

|| 10.55.3 ||

taṁ śambaraḥ kāma-rūpī hṛtvā tokam anirdaśam

sa viditvātmanaḥ śatruṁ prāsyodanvaty agād gṛham

TRANSLATION

The demon Śambara, who could assume any form he desired, kidnapped the infant before He was even ten days old. Understanding Pradyumna to be his enemy, Śambara threw Him into the sea and then returned home.

COMMENTARY

Śambara stole the infant before he was ten days old. The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* says Pradyumna was kidnapped six days after His birth. Śambara understood Kāmadeva was his enemy (*viditvā-ātmanaḥ-śatrum*), because he learned from Nārada that Kāmadeva would kill him in the future.

|| 10.55.4 ||

taṁ nirjagāra balavān mīnaḥ so 'py aparaiḥ saha

vṛto jālena mahatā gṛhīto matsya-jīvibhiḥ

TRANSLATION

A powerful fish swallowed Pradyumna, and this fish, along with others, was caught in a huge net and seized by fishermen.

COMMENTARY

Pradyumna was swallowed by a powerful fish (*balavān-mīnaḥ*). This was done by the desire of the Lord who likes to perform a variety of pastimes. It was not that the fish was stronger than Pradyumna.

|| 10.55.5 ||

taṁ śambarāya kaivartā upājahrur upāyanam

sūdā mahānasaṁ nītvā-vadyan sudhitinādbhutam

TRANSLATION

The fishermen presented that extraordinary fish to Śambara, who had his cooks bring it to the kitchen, where they began cutting it up with a butcher knife.

COMMENTARY

The cooks cut open the fish with a big knife.

|| 10.55.6 ||

dṛṣṭvā tad-udare bālam māyāvatyai nyavedayan

nārado 'kathayat sarvaṁ tasyāḥ śaṅkita-cetasaḥ

bālasya tattvam utpattiṁ matsyodara-niveśanam

TRANSLATION

Seeing a male child in the belly of the fish, the cooks gave the infant to Māyāvatī, who was astonished. Nārada Muni then appeared and explained to her everything about the child's birth and His entering the fish's abdomen.

COMMENTARY

"Told her everything" (*akathayat-sarvam*) means Nārada said, "Māyāvatī, this child is Cupid (Kāmadeva), your husband!"

|| 10.55.7-8 ||

sā ca kāmasya vai patnī ratir nāma yaśasvinī

patyur nirdagdha-dehasya dehotpattim pratīkṣatī

nirūpitā śambareṇa sā sūdaudana-sādhane

kāmadevaṁ śiśuṁ buddhvā cakre snehaṁ tadārbhake

TRANSLATION

Māyāvatī was in fact Cupid's renowned wife, Rati. While waiting for her husband to obtain a new body—his previous one having been burnt up—she had been assigned by Śambara to prepare vegetables and rice. Māyāvatī understood that this infant was actually Kāmadeva, and thus she began to feel love for Him.

COMMENTARY

The *Matsya Purāṇa* explains why Māyāvatī was waiting for Kāmadeva (Cupid) to take a new body. When Cupid's body was burned to ashes by Lord Śiva, Rati worshiped Lord Śiva to obtain another body for Cupid. Śambara, having also come to Śiva for a benediction, was recognized by the lord first, who told him, "You should now ask for your benediction." Śambara, struck with lust at seeing Rati, replied that he wanted her

as his benediction, and Śiva complied. Lord Śiva then comforted the weeping Rati, telling her, “Go with him, and in his very home you will attain what you desire.” Thereupon, Rati bewildered Śambara with her deluding power and, taking the name Māyāvatī, remained in his house without being touched by him.

|| 10.55.9 ||

nāti-dīrgheṇa kālena sa kārṣṇi rūḍha-yauvanaḥ

janayām āsa nārīṇāṁ vīkṣantīnāṁ ca vibhramam

TRANSLATION

After a short time, this son of Kṛṣṇa—Pradyumna—attained His full youth. He enchanted all women who gazed upon Him.

|| 10.55.10 ||

sā tam patiṁ padma-dalāyatekṣaṇaṁ pralamba-bāhuṁ nara-loka-sundaram

sa-vrīḍa-hāsottabhita-bhruvekṣatī prītyopatasthe ratir aṅga sauratairḥ

TRANSLATION

My dear King, with a bashful smile and raised eyebrows, Māyāvatī exhibited various gestures of conjugal attraction as she lovingly approached her husband, whose eyes were broad like the petals of a lotus, whose arms were very long and who was the most beautiful of men.

COMMENTARY

Rati expressed conjugal attraction to Pradyumna by the dancing movements of her upraised eyebrows. Here is the truth about this: Intending to inform him of the entire truth of his identity either that very day or else the next day, she was thinking, “Then I will display full conjugal love for him.” But by the whim of destiny Māyāvatī came under the sway of lust even before revealing the truth to Him in private, and spontaneously exhibited her conjugal feelings.

|| 10.55.11 ||

tām aha bhagavān kārṣṇir mātas te matir anyathā

mātṛ-bhāvam atikramya vartase kāminī yathā

TRANSLATION

Lord Pradyumna told her, “O mother, your attitude has changed. You are overstepping the proper feelings of a mother and behaving like a lover.”

COMMENTARY

The word *bhagavān* (Supreme Lord) implies that even though Pradyumna (*kārṣṇir*) was endowed with qualities of omniscience, nevertheless by the will of Kṛṣṇa, the treasure house of transcen-dental pastimes, Pradyumna’s omniscience became covered and He spoke in this manner. The real meaning of His words is: “You should not have any other tendency than this ecstatic loving attraction you are displaying. After all, you have quite rightly transgressed the mood of a mother (*vātsalya-bhāva*), and are actually my lover (*kāminī*) in conjugal rasa.”

|| 10.55.12 ||

ratir uvāca

bhavān nārāyaṇa-sutaḥ śambareṇa hṛto gṛhāt

ahaṁ te ’dhikṛtā patnī ratiḥ kāmo bhavān prabho

TRANSLATION

Rati said: You are the son of Lord Nārāyaṇa and were kidnapped from Your parents’ home by Śambara. I, Rati, am Your legitimate wife, O master, because You are Cupid.

COMMENTARY

Māyāvatī considered him to be Kāmadeva, so she said, “I am your wife.” Pradyumna made her (who was formerly Rati, the material wife of the material Kāmadeva) his wife by touching her, just as a touchstone transforms objects by contact. However, she is actually his own eternal *śakti*, the mother of Aniruddha, according to the *Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī*. [Rukmavatī was the actual mother.]

|| 10.55.13 ||

eṣa tvānirdaśaṁ sindhāv akṣipac chambaro 'suraḥ

matsyo 'grasīt tad-udarād itaḥ prāpto bhavān prabho

TRANSLATION

That demon, Śambara, threw You into the sea when You were not even ten days old, and a fish swallowed You. Then in this very place we recovered You from the fish's abdomen, O master.

|| 10.55.14 ||

tam imaṁ jahi durdharṣaṁ durjayaṁ śatrum ātmanaḥ

māyā-śata-vidaṁ taṁ ca māyābhir mohanādibhiḥ

TRANSLATION

Now kill this dreadful Śambara, Your formidable enemy. Although he knows hundreds of magic spells, You can defeat him with bewildering magic and other techniques.

|| 10.55.15 ||

parīśocati te mātā kurarīva gata-prajā

putra-snehākulā dīnā vivatsā gaur ivāturā

TRANSLATION

Your poor mother, having lost her son, cries for You like a kurarī bird. She is overwhelmed with love for her child, just like a cow that has lost its calf.

|| 10.55.16 ||

prabhāṣyaivaṁ dadau vidyāṁ pradyumnāya mahātmane

māyāvatī mahā-māyāṁ sarva-māyā-vināśinīm

TRANSLATION

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Speaking thus, Māyāvatī gave to the great soul Pradyumna the mystic knowledge called Mahāmāyā, which vanquishes all other deluding spells.

|| 10.55.17 ||

sa ca śambaram abhyetya saṁyugāya samāhvayat

aviṣahyais tam ākṣepaiḥ kṣipan sañjanayan kalim

TRANSLATION

Pradyumna approached Śambara and called him to battle, hurling intolerable insults at him to foment a conflict.

|| 10.55.18 ||

so 'dhikṣipto durvācobhiḥ padāhata ivoragaḥ

niścakrāma gadā-pāṇir amarṣāt tāmra-locanaḥ

TRANSLATION

Offended by these harsh words, Śambara became as agitated as a kicked snake. He came out, club in hand, his eyes red with rage.

|| 10.55.19 ||

gadām āvidhya tarasā pradyumnāya mahātmane

prakṣipya vyanadan nādaṁ vajra-niṣpeṣa-niṣṭhuram

TRANSLATION

Śambara whirled his club swiftly about and then hurled it at the wise Pradyumna, producing a sound as sharp as a thunder crack.

COMMENTARY

Throwing the club, Śambara produced a sound as sharp as a thunder crack. The phrase *vyanadan nādam*, "creating a resonance" is a valid statement in the same way as the phrase *vacanam avocat*, "he made a statement."

|| 10.55.20 ||

tām āpatantīṁ bhagavān pradyumno gadayā gadām

apāsya śatrave kruddhaḥ prāhiṇot sva-gadāṁ nṛpa

TRANSLATION

As Śambara's club came flying toward Him, Lord Pradyumna knocked it away with His own. Then, O King, Pradyumna angrily threw His club at the enemy.

|| 10.55.21 ||

sa ca māyāṁ samāśritya daiteyīṁ maya-darśitam

mumuce 'stra-mayaṁ varṣaṁ kārṣṇau vaihāyaso 'suraḥ

TRANSLATION

Resorting to the black magic of the Daityas taught to him by Maya Dānava, Śambara suddenly appeared in the sky and released a downpour of weapons upon Kṛṣṇa's son.

COMMENTARY

While moving in the sky (*vaihayasaḥ*) Śambara released weapons on Kāmadeva.

|| 10.55.22 ||

bādhyamāno 'stra-varṣeṇa raukmiṇeyo mahā-rathaḥ

sattvātmikāṁ mahā-vidyāṁ sarva-māyopamardinīm

TRANSLATION

Harassed by this rain of weapons, Lord Raukmiṇeya, the greatly powerful warrior, made use of the mystic science called Mahā-māyā, which was created from the mode of goodness and which could defeat all other mystic power.

COMMENTARY

Kāmadeva used sāttvika weapons. The verb of the sentence, *prāyuṅkta* (he used) is found in the next verse.

|| 10.55.23 ||

tato gauhyaka-gāndharva-paiśācoraga-rākṣasīḥ

prāyuṅkta śataśo daityaḥ kārṣṇir vyadhamayat sa tāḥ

TRANSLATION

The demon then unleashed hundreds of mystic weapons belonging to the Guhyakas, Gandharvas, Piśācas, Uragas and Rākṣasas, but Lord Kārṣṇi, Pradyumna, struck them all down.

|| 10.55.24 ||

niśātam asim udyamya sa-kirīṭaṁ sa-kuṇḍalam

śambarasya śiraḥ kāyāt tāmra-śmaśrv ojasāharat

TRANSLATION

Drawing His sharp-edged sword, Pradyumna forcefully cut off Śambara's head, complete with red mustache, helmet and earrings.

|| 10.55.25 ||

ākīryamāṇo divi-jaiḥ stuvadbhiḥ kusumotkaraiḥ

bhāryayāmbara-cāriṇyā puraṁ nīto vihāyasā

TRANSLATION

As the residents of the higher planets showered Pradyumna with flowers and chanted His praises, His wife appeared in the sky and transported Him through the heavens, back to the city of Dvārakā.

|| 10.55.26 ||

antaḥ-pura-varaṁ rājan lalanā-śata-saṅkulam

viveśa patnyā gaganād vidyuteva balāhakaḥ

TRANSLATION

O King, Lord Pradyumna and His wife resembled a cloud accompanied by lightning as they descended from the sky into the inner quarters of Kṛṣṇa's most excellent palace, which were crowded with lovely women.

|| 10.55.27-28 ||

taṁ dṛṣṭvā jalada-śyāmaṁ pīta-kauśeya-vāsasam

pralamba-bāhuṁ tāmrākṣaṁ su-smitaṁ rucirānanam

sv-alaṅkṛta-mukhāmbhojaṁ nīla-vakrālakālibhiḥ

kṛṣṇaṁ matvā striyo hrītā nililyus tatra tatra ha

TRANSLATION

The women of the palace thought He was Lord Kṛṣṇa when they saw His dark-blue complexion the color of a rain cloud, His yellow silk garments, His long arms and red-tinged eyes, His charming lotus face adorned with a pleasing smile, His fine ornaments and His thick, curly blue hair. Thus the women became bashful and hid themselves here and there.

COMMENTARY

Pradyumna looked like Kṛṣṇa with his abundant hair (*ālaka-ālibhiḥ*), which was both dark-blue and curly.

|| 10.55.29 ||

avadhārya śanair īṣad vailakṣaṇyena yoṣitaḥ

upajagmuḥ pramuditāḥ sa-strī ratnaṁ su-vismitāḥ

TRANSLATION

Gradually, from the slight differences between His appearance and Kṛṣṇa's, the ladies realized He was not the Lord. Delighted and astonished, they approached Pradyumna and His consort, who was a jewel among women.

COMMENTARY

Understanding (*avadhārya*) that Pradyumna was not Kṛṣṇa by his differing characteristics, the queens approached him and his consort Rati, who is described as "the jewel among women" (*strī ratnaṁ*).

|| 10.55.30 ||

atha tatrāsitāpāṅgī vaidarbhī valgu-bhāṣiṇī

asmarat sva-sutaṁ naṣṭaṁ sneha-snuta-payodharā

TRANSLATION

Seeing Pradyumna, sweet-voiced, dark-eyed Rukmiṇī remembered her lost son, and her breasts became moist out of affection.

|| 10.55.31 ||

ko nv ayam nara-vaidūryaḥ kasya vā kamalekṣaṇaḥ

dhṛtaḥ kayā vā jaṭhare keyaṁ labdhā tv anena vā

TRANSLATION

[Śrīmatī Rukmiṇī-devī said:] Who is this lotus-eyed jewel among men? What man's son is He, and what woman carried Him in her womb? And who is this woman He has taken as His wife?

COMMENTARY

Rukmiṇī said, "Whose (*kasya*) son is this best among men (*nara-vaidūrya*)?"

|| 10.55.32 ||

mama cāpy ātmajo naṣṭo nīto yaḥ sūtikā-gṛhāt

etat-tulya-vayo-rūpo yadi jīvati kutracit

TRANSLATION

If my lost son, who was kidnapped from the maternity room, were still alive somewhere, He would be of the same age and appearance as this young man.

COMMENTARY

Rukmiṇī continued, “My son, who was taken by some kidnapper (*bāla-graham*, seizer of children), would be of the same age and appearance as this young man.”

|| 10.55.33 ||

kathaṁ tv anena samprāptaṁ sārūpyaṁ śārṅga-dhanvanaḥ

ākṛtyāvayavair gatyā svara-hāsāvalokanaiḥ

TRANSLATION

But how is it that this young man so much resembles my own Lord, Kṛṣṇa, the wielder of Śārṅga, in His bodily form and His limbs, in His gait and the tone of His voice, and in His smiling glance?

|| 10.55.34 ||

sa eva vā bhaven nūnaṁ yo me garbhe dhṛto ‘rbhakaḥ

amuṣmin prītir adhikā vāmaḥ sphurati me bhujaḥ

TRANSLATION

Yes, He must be the same child I bore in my womb, since I feel great affection for Him and my left arm is quivering.

|| 10.55.35 ||

evaṁ mīmāṁsamaṇāyāṁ vaidarbhyāṁ devakī-sutaḥ

devaky-ānakadundubhyām uttamaḥ-śloka āgamat

TRANSLATION

As Queen Rukmiṇī conjectured in this way, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī, arrived on the scene with Vāsudeva and Devakī.

|| 10.55.36 ||

vijñātārtho 'pi bhagavāṁs tūṣṇīm āsa janārdanaḥ

nārado 'kathayat sarvaṁ śambarāharaṇādikam

TRANSLATION

Although Lord Janārdana knew perfectly well what had transpired, He remained silent. The sage Nārada, however, explained everything, beginning with Śambara's kidnapping of the child.

|| 10.55.37 ||

tac chrutvā mahad āścaryaṁ kṛṣṇāntaḥ-pura-yoṣitaḥ

abhyanandan bahūn abdān naṣṭaṁ mṛtam ivāgatam

TRANSLATION

When the women of Lord Kṛṣṇa's palace heard this most amazing account, they joyfully greeted Pradyumna, who had been lost for many years but who had now returned as if from the dead.

|| 10.55.38 ||

devakī vasudevaś ca kṛṣṇa-rāmau tathā striyaḥ

dampatī tau pariṣvajya rukmiṇī ca yayur mudam

TRANSLATION

Devakī, Vasudeva, Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma and all the women of the palace, especially Queen Rukmiṇī, embraced the young couple and rejoiced.

|| 10.55.39 ||

naṣṭaṁ pradyumnam āyātam ākarṇya dvārakaukasaḥ

aho mṛta ivāyāto bālo diṣṭyeti hābruvan

TRANSLATION

Hearing that lost Pradyumna had come home, the residents of Dvārakā declared, “Ah, providence has allowed this child to return as if from death!”

|| 10.55.40 ||

yaṁ vai muhuḥ pitṛ-sarūpa-nijeśa-bhāvās

tan-mātaro yad abhajan raha-rūḍha-bhāvāḥ

citraṁ na tat khalu ramāspada-bimba-bimbe

kāme smare ’kṣa-viṣaye kim utānya-nāryaḥ

TRANSLATION

It is not astonishing that the palace women, who should have felt maternal affection for Pradyumna, privately felt ecstatic attraction for Him as if He were their own Lord. After all, the son exactly resembled His father. Indeed, Pradyumna was a perfect reflection of the beauty of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the shelter of the goddess of fortune, and appeared before their eyes as Cupid Himself. Since even those on the level of His mother felt conjugal attraction for Him, then what to speak of how other women felt when they saw Him?

COMMENTARY

This verse describes the beauty of Pradyumna. On seeing him Rukmiṇī thought of (*bhāvās*) her own Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, because His beauty was equal to that Kṛṣṇa, His father. However, the word *tan-mātaro* (his mothers) refers to Rukmiṇī alone, but appears in the plural form to show respect. Even before finding out Pradyumna’s identity, Rukmiṇī developed full-blown ecstatic motherly love (*bhāvah:vātsalya-mayī prītiḥ*) for Him, as stated previously in verse thirty-four: *amuṣmin prītir adhikā* , “I feel great affection for Him.”

Rukmiṇī displayed her parental affection in the privacy of her chambers (*raha*), since Kṛṣṇa’s other wives did not have the right to enter there. Concluding that Pradyumna must be her lost son, but still doubtful, Rukmiṇī then “worshiped him” (*abhajan*) by

inspecting his limbs, smelling his head, and stroking his body with her hands. It was not astonishing for her to act in this way with Pradyumna. Why? Because He was the shelter of the goddess of fortune (*ramāspada*), the abode of all beauty, and the most perfect reflection of the personal form of Kṛṣṇa (*bimba-bimbe:śrī kṛṣṇa-gātram*) to be seen in all the three worlds.

Thus Rukmiṇī ascertained that Pradyumna was Kṛṣṇa's son, and now had directly realized this herself. But only she, His mother, had such an attitude toward Him, and no other women as stated by the words beginning *kāme smare*. Pradyumna is called Kāmadeva or Smara because whenever the palace women saw Pradyumna, they immediately remembered their consort, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Even without Pradyumna's presence, lust would arise in the queens just by remembering (*smara*) Him. What to speak then of his personal presence? Could any other women behave like Rukmiṇī towards Pradyumna (Kāmadeva, Smara)? No, they could not, for they would become agitated by lust.

Thus ends the commentary on the Fifty Fifth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Fifty-six

The Syamantaka Jewel

|| 10.56.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

satrājitaḥ sva-tanayāṁ kṛṣṇāya kṛta-kilbiṣaḥ

syamantakena maṇinā svayam udyamya dattavān

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having offended Lord Kṛṣṇa, Satrājit tried as best he could to atone by presenting Him with his daughter and the Syamantaka jewel.

COMMENTARY

In this chapter Kṛṣṇa gets a bad reputation due to a false rumor, collects the Syamantaka jewel and Jāmbavatī, the daughter of Jāmbavān, whom He marries upon returning to Dvārakā. The name Satrājit sometimes ends in *akāra* (“a”) and sometimes in *takāra* (“ta”).

|| 10.56.2 ||

śrī-rājovāca

satrājitaḥ kim akarod brahman kṛṣṇasya kilbiṣaḥ

syamantakaḥ kutas tasya kasmād dattā sutā hareḥ

TRANSLATION

Mahārāja Parīkṣit inquired: O brāhmaṇa, what did King Satrājit do to offend Lord Kṛṣṇa? Where did he get the Syamantaka jewel, and why did he give his daughter to the Supreme Lord?

COMMENTARY

Parīkṣit Mahārāja asked, "Why did Satrājit give his daughter to Hari?" The word *hareḥ* means *haraye* (Lord Hari).

|| 10.56.3 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

āsīt satrājitaḥ sūryo bhaktasya paramaḥ sakhā

prītas tasmai maṇiṁ prādāt sa ca tuṣṭaḥ syamantakam

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Sūrya, the sun-god, felt great affection for his devotee Satrājit. Acting as his greatest friend, the demigod gave him the jewel called Syamantaka as a token of his satisfaction.

COMMENTARY

Though Satrājit was a respectful devotee of the sun-god, the sun-god treated him affectionately as a best friend (*paramaḥ sakhā*).

|| 10.56.4 ||

sa taṁ bibhran maṇiṁ kaṇṭhe bhrājamāno yathā raviḥ

praviṣṭo dvārakāṁ rājan tejasā nopalakṣitaḥ

TRANSLATION

Wearing the jewel on his neck, Satrājit entered Dvārakā. He shone as brightly as the sun itself, O King, and thus he went unrecognized because of the jewel's effulgence.

COMMENTARY

The citizens did not recognize (*nopalakṣitaḥ*) Satrājit; they mistook him for the sun-god.

|| 10.56.5 ||

taṁ vilokya janā dūrāt tejasā muṣṭa-dṛṣṭayaḥ

dīvyate 'kṣair bhagavate śaśaṁsuḥ sūrya-śaṅkitāḥ

TRANSLATION

As the people looked at Satrājit from a distance, his brilliance blinded them. They presumed he was the sun-god, Sūrya, and went to tell Lord Kṛṣṇa, who was at that time playing at dice.

|| 10.56.6 ||

nārāyaṇa namas te 'stu śaṅkha-cakra-gadā-dhara

dāmodarāravindākṣa govinda yadu-nandana

TRANSLATION

[The residents of Dvārakā said:] Obeisances unto You, O Nārāyaṇa, O holder of the conch, disc and club, O lotus-eyed Dāmodara, O Govinda, O cherished descendant of Yadu!

COMMENTARY

By chanting His names, the Dvārakāvāsīs caught the attention of Kṛṣṇa, who was absorbed in a dice game.

|| 10.56.7 ||

eṣa āyāti savitā tvāṁ didṛkṣur jagat-pate

muṣṇan gabhasti-cakreṇa nṛṇāṁ cakṣūṁṣi tigma-guḥ

TRANSLATION

Lord Savitā has come to see You, O Lord of the universe. He is blinding everyone's eyes with his intensely effulgent rays.

COMMENTARY

They said, "Lord Savitā is blinding (*muṣṇan:stealing*) our eyes with the network of His intense rays (*gabhasti-cakreṇa*)."

|| 10.56.8 ||

nanv anvicchanti te mārgaṁ trī-lokyāṁ vibudharṣabhāḥ

jñātvādya gūḍhaṁ yaduṣu draṣṭuṁ tvāṁ yāty ajaḥ prabho

TRANSLATION

The most exalted demigods in the three worlds are certainly anxious to seek You out, O Lord, now that You have hidden Yourself among the Yadu dynasty. Thus the unborn sun-god has come to see You here.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa might object, "Why does the sun-god want to see Me, a mere mortal?" They answer, "Indeed (*nanu:niścitam*) the best of the demigods search for You, and today the unborn (*ajaḥ*) sun-god has come to see You."

|| 10.56.9 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

niśamya bāla-vacanaṁ prahasyāmbuja-locanaḥ

prāha nāsau ravir devaḥ satrājin maṇinā jvalan

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: Hearing these innocent words, the lotus-eyed Lord smiled broadly and said, "This is not the sun-god, Ravi, but rather Satrājit, who is glowing because of his jewel."

|| 10.56.10 ||

satrājit sva-gṛhaṁ śrīmat kṛta-kautuka-maṅgalam

praviśya deva-sadane maṇiṁ viprair nyaveśayat

TRANSLATION

King Satrājit entered his opulent home, festively executing auspicious rituals. He had qualified brāhmaṇas install the Syamantaka jewel in the house's temple room.

|| 10.56.11 ||

dine dine svarṇa-bhārān aṣṭau sa sṛjati prabho

durbhikṣa-māry-ariṣṭāni sarpādhi-vyādhayo 'śubhāḥ

na santi māyinas tatra yatrāste 'bhyarcito maṇiḥ

TRANSLATION

Each day the gem would produce eight bhāras of gold, my dear Prabhu, and the place in which it was kept and properly worshiped would be free of calamities such as famine or untimely death, and also of evils like snake bites, mental and physical disorders and the presence of deceitful persons.

COMMENTARY

Every day the Syamantaka jewel produced eight *bhāras* of gold (*svarṇa-bhārān aṣṭau*). The measurement of a bhāra is defined as follows:

> *caturbhir vrīhibhir guñjāṁ guñjāḥ pañca paṇaṁ paṇān*
>
> *aṣṭau dharaṇam aṣṭau ca karṣaṁ tāṁś caturaḥ palam*
>
> *tulāṁ pala-śataṁ prāhur bhāraḥ syād viṁśatis tulāḥ*

> "Four rice grains are called one *guñjā*; five *guñjās*, one *paṇa*; eight *paṇas*, one *karṣa*; four *karṣas*, one *pala*; and one hundred *palas*, one *tulā*. Twenty *tulās* make up one *bhāra*." Since there are about 3,700 grains of rice in an ounce, the Syamantaka jewel was producing approximately 170 pounds (78kgs.) of gold every day." There can be no untimely death (*marī*) where this jewel is situated.

|| 10.56.12 ||

sa yācito maṇiṁ kvāpi yadu-rājāya śauriṇā

naivārtha-kāmukaḥ prādād yācñā-bhaṅgam atarkayan

TRANSLATION

On one occasion Lord Kṛṣṇa requested Satrājit to give the jewel to the Yadu king, Ugrasena, but Satrājit was so greedy that he refused. He gave no thought to the seriousness of the offense he committed by denying the Lord's request.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa asked Satrājit to donate the jewel to the treasury of King Ugrasena (*yadu-rājāya*, the king of the Yadus). Satrājit refused without even considering the results of ignoring the Lord's request (*yācñā-bhaṅgam atarkayan*). By not offering the jewel to Kṛṣṇa, but enjoying it himself instead, that object, which had the power to remove all misfortune, would instead become the cause of all misfortune. How much more this is so, then, when even though Kṛṣṇa Himself was requesting it for King Ugrasena, still Satrājit refused to offer it to Him.

|| 10.56.13 ||

tam ekadā maṇiṁ kaṇṭhe pratimucya mahā-prabham

praseno hayam āruhya mṛgāyāṁ vyacarad vane

TRANSLATION

Once Satrājit's brother, Prasena, having hung the brilliant jewel about his neck, mounted a horse and went hunting in the forest.

COMMENTARY

Prasena, Satrājit's brother, fixed (*pratimucya*) the jewel around his neck and went hunting. This verse introduces a series of verses which describe the inauspicious results of Satrājit's refusal of Kṛṣṇa's request.

|| 10.56.14 ||

prasenaṁ sa-hayaṁ hatvā maṇim ācchidya keśarī

giriṁ viśan jāmbavatā nihato maṇim icchatā

TRANSLATION

A lion killed Prasena and his horse and took the jewel. But when the lion entered a mountain cave he was killed by Jāmbavān, who wanted the jewel.

COMMENTARY

After killing Prasena, the lion seized (*ācchidya*) the jewel.

|| 10.56.15 ||

so ’pi cakre kumārasya maṇiṁ krīḍanakaṁ bile

apaśyan bhrātaraṁ bhrātā satrājit paryatapyata

TRANSLATION

Within the cave Jāmbavān let his young son have the Syamantaka jewel as a toy to play with. Meanwhile Satrājit, not seeing his brother return, became deeply troubled.

|| 10.56.16 ||

prāyaḥ kṛṣṇena nihato maṇi-grīvo vanaṁ gataḥ

bhrātā mameti tac chrutvā karṇe karṇe ’japan janāḥ

TRANSLATION

He said, “Kṛṣṇa probably killed my brother, who went to the forest wearing the jewel on his neck.” The general populace heard this accusation and began whispering it in one another’s ears.

COMMENTARY

Those people who were of a similar evil nature heard this and whispered about it to each other (*ajapan*).

|| 10.56.17 ||

bhagavāṁs tad upaśrutya duryaśo liptam ātmani

mārṣṭuṁ prasena-padavīm anvapadyata nāgaraiḥ

TRANSLATION

When Lord Kṛṣṇa heard this rumor, He wanted to remove the stain on His reputation. So He took some of Dvārakā's citizens with Him and set out to retrace Prasena's path.

|| 10.56.18 ||

hataṁ prasenaṁ aśvaṁ ca vīkṣya keśariṇā vane

taṁ cādri-pṛṣṭhe nihatam ṛkṣeṇa dadṛśur janāḥ

TRANSLATION

In the forest they found Prasena and his horse, both killed by the lion. Further on they found the lion dead on a mountainside, slain by Ṛkṣa [Jāmbavān].

|| 10.56.19 ||

ṛkṣa-rāja-bilaṁ bhīmam andhena tamasāvṛtam

eko viveśa bhagavān avasthāpya bahiḥ prajāḥ

TRANSLATION

The Lord stationed His subjects outside the terrifying, pitch-dark cave of the king of the bears, and then He entered alone.

|| 10.56.20 ||

tatra dṛṣṭvā maṇi-preṣṭhaṁ bāla-krīḍanakaṁ kṛtam

hartuṁ kṛta-matis tasminn avatasthe 'rbhakāntike

TRANSLATION

There Lord Kṛṣṇa saw that the most precious of jewels had been made into a child's plaything. Determined to take it away, He approached the child.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa saw the jewel, which had become a toy for the child.

|| 10.56.21 ||

tam apūrvaṁ naraṁ dṛṣṭvā dhātrī cukrośa bhīta-vat

tac chrutvābhyadravat kruddho jāmbavān balināṁ varaḥ

TRANSLATION

The child's nurse cried out in fear upon seeing that extraordinary person standing before them. Jāmbavān, strongest of the strong, heard her cries and angrily ran toward the Lord.

COMMENTARY

The nurse "cried in fear" (*cukrośa bhīta-vat*) implies that she did not even see Kṛṣṇa's intention to take away the jewel. In actuality, however, she was not afraid, since ecstasy arose in her as the natural effect of seeing Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.56.22 ||

sa vai bhagavatā tena yuyudhe svāmīnātmanaḥ

puruṣam prākṛtaṁ matvā kupito nānubhāva-vit

TRANSLATION

Unaware of His true position and thinking Him an ordinary man, Jāmbavān angrily began fighting with the Supreme Lord, his master.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa never experienced the satisfaction of a good fight with such weaklings as Cāṇūra, Kaṁsa and Jarāsandha. Therefore the Lord desired to fight with one of His own servants having similar strength as Himself, and thus achieve the happiness of battle. Kṛṣṇa also wanted to please His devotee, Jāmbavān, who had not attained a full taste of *vīra-rasa* (heroism) even by fighting with the armies of Rāvaṇa. To fulfill His and Jāmbavān's desires, Kṛṣṇa ordered *yogamāyā* to use His *līlā-śakti* to cover His sweet (*mādhurya*) aspect from Jāmbavān. Thus Jāmbavān thought of Kṛṣṇa as an ordinary human.

|| 10.56.23 ||

dvandva-yuddhaṁ su-tumulam ubhayor vijigīṣatoḥ

āyudhāśma-drumair dorbhiḥ kravyārthe śyenayor iva

TRANSLATION

The two fought furiously in single combat, each determined to win. Contending against each other with various weapons and then with stones, tree trunks and finally their bare arms, they struggled like two hawks battling over a piece of flesh.

COMMENTARY

They fought like two hawks fighting for flesh (*kravya*).

|| 10.56.24 ||

āsīt tad aṣṭā-vimśāham itaretara-muṣṭibhiḥ

vajra-niṣpeṣa-paruṣair aviśramam ahar-niśam

TRANSLATION

The fight went on without rest for twenty-eight days, the two opponents striking each other with their fists, which fell like the cracking blows of lightning.

COMMENTARY

They fought continuously for twenty-eight days and nights (*ahar-niṣam*) without a moment's rest; with blows (*niṣpesa*) as hard as the striking of thunderbolts.

|| 10.56.25 ||

kṛṣṇa-muṣṭi-viniṣpāta niṣpiṣṭāṅgoru bandhanaḥ

kṣīṇa-sattvaḥ svinna-gātras tam āhātīva vismitaḥ

TRANSLATION

His bulging muscles pummeled by the blows of Lord Kṛṣṇa's fists, his strength faltering and his limbs perspiring, Jāmbavān, greatly astonished, finally spoke to the Lord.

COMMENTARY

As Jāmbavān's huge muscles were being beaten by Kṛṣṇa, he consi-dered, "Who can be stronger than me except Rāma?" Remembering those old thoughts, Jāmbavān became astonished and concluded that this must be his Lord.

|| 10.56.26 ||

jāne tvāṁ saṛva-bhūtānāṁ prāṇa ojaḥ saho balam

viṣṇuṁ purāṇa-puruṣaṁ prabhaviṣṇum adhīśvaram

TRANSLATION

[Jāmbavān said:] I know now that You are the life air and the sensory, mental and bodily strength of all living beings. You are Lord Viṣṇu, the original person, the supreme, all-powerful controller.

COMMENTARY

Jāmbavān said, "If all the *prāṇa* of the countless living entities in all the billions of universes were brought together, and if all the strengths of all the senses (*oja*), minds (*saha*) and bodies (*bala*) were brought together in one place, still I understand that all this would be You alone, since all these are Your *vibhūtis*. Thus how can Your strength be countered by the strength of one entity like me? It is like a butterfly trying to defeat Garuda. You are the all-pervading Lord Viṣṇu and I am a single localized individual. You are the primeval person and I am a recently manifest person. You are all-powerful

(*prabhaviṣṇum*) and I am powerless. You are the supreme controller of all (*adhīśvaram*) and I am the controlled."

|| 10.56.27 ||

tvaṁ hi viśva-sṛjām sraṣṭā sṛṣṭānām api yac ca sat

kālaḥ kalayatām īśaḥ para ātmā tathātmanām

TRANSLATION

You are the ultimate creator of all creators of the universe, and of everything created You are the underlying substance. You are the subduer of all subduers, the Supreme Lord and Supreme Soul of all souls.

COMMENTARY

Jāmbavān said, "You are the creator of all creators of the universe, and I am only the creation of Brahmā. You alone are the cause (*sat*) of all the entities created within the universe. Brahmā and other creators are merely secondary creators. Of destroyers You are time, the ultimate destroyer (*kāla*) capable of doing it, whereas I am subject to annihilation. You are the Supreme Soul of all living entities (*jīvas*), whereas I am only one of the *jīvas*."

|| 10.56.28 ||

yasyeṣad-utkalita-roṣa-kaṭākṣa-mokṣair

vartmādiśat kṣubhita-nakra-timiṅgalo 'bdhiḥ

setuḥ kṛtaḥ sva-yaśa ujjvalitā ca laṅkā

rakṣaḥ-śirāṁsi bhuvi petur iṣu-kṣatāni

TRANSLATION

You are He who impelled the ocean to give way when His sidelong glances, slightly manifesting His anger, disturbed the crocodiles and timiṅgila fish within the watery depths. You are He who built a great bridge to establish His fame, who burned down the city of Laṅkā, and whose arrows severed the heads of Rāvaṇa, which then fell to the ground.

COMMENTARY

Jāmbavān said, “Since all these things are true, I know You are my worshipable Lord Rāmacandra. By casting a slight glance of anger, You made the ocean, which was filled with agitated crocodiles and *timiṅgila* fish, give You passage to Laṅkā. You built a bridge as well, which is Your very fame, and Laṅkā was burned down. Your arrows severed Rāvaṇa’s ten heads, which then fell to the ground.”

|| 10.56.29-30 ||

iti vijñāta-viijñānam ṛkṣa-rājānam acyutaḥ

vyājahāra mahā-rāja bhagavān devakī-sutaḥ

abhimṛśyāravindākṣaḥ pāṇinā śaṁ-kareṇa tam

kṛpayā parayā bhaktaṁ megha-gambhīrayā girā

TRANSLATION

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] O King, Lord Kṛṣṇa then addressed the king of the bears, who had understood the truth. The lotus-eyed Personality of Godhead, the son of Devakī, touched Jāmbavān with His hand, which bestows all blessings, and spoke to His devotee with sublime compassion, His grave voice deeply resounding like a cloud.

COMMENTARY

Jāmbavān personally realized (*vijñāta*) the knowledge (*vijñānam: visistha-jñāna*) of Bhagavān, so Kṛṣṇa touched him with His hand to relieve His devotee of his bodily pains.

|| 10.56.31 ||

maṇi-hetor iha prāptā vayam ṛkṣa-pate bilam

mithyābhiśāpaṁ pramṛjann ātmano maṇināmunā

TRANSLATION

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] It is for this jewel, O lord of the bears, that we have come to your cave. I intend to use the jewel to disprove the false accusations against Me.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “Many of us came to the entrance of this cave, and I have entered it in order to dispel the false rumors about Me concerning this jewel.”

|| 10.56.32 ||

ity uktaḥ svāṁ duhitaraṁ kanyāṁ jāmbavatīṁ mudā

arhaṇārtham sa maṇinā kṛṣṇāyopajahāra ha

TRANSLATION

Thus addressed, Jāmbavān happily honored Lord Kṛṣṇa by offering Him his maiden daughter, Jāmbavatī, together with the jewel.

COMMENTARY

Jāmbavān happily gave his virgin daughter to Kṛṣṇa along with the jewel.

|| 10.56.33 ||

adṛṣṭvā nirgamaṁ śaureḥ praviṣṭasya bilaṁ janāḥ

pratīkṣya dvādaśāhāni duḥkhitāḥ sva-puraṁ yayuḥ

TRANSLATION

After Lord Śauri had entered the cave, the people of Dvārakā who had accompanied Him had waited twelve days without seeing Him come out again. Finally they had given up and returned to their city in great sorrow.

|| 10.56.34 ||

niśamya devakī devī rakmiṇy ānakadundubhiḥ

suhṛdo jñātayo ’śocan bilāt kṛṣṇam anirgatam

TRANSLATION

When Devakī, Rukmiṇī-devī, Vasudeva and the Lord's other relatives and friends heard that He had not come out of the cave, they all lamented.

|| 10.56.35 ||

satrājitaṁ śapantas te duḥkhitā dvārakaukasaḥ

upatasthuś candrabhāgāṁ durgāṁ kṛṣṇopalabdhaye

TRANSLATION

Cursing Satrājit, the sorrowful residents of Dvārakā approached the Durgā deity named Candrabhāgā and prayed to her for Kṛṣṇa's return.

|| 10.56.36 ||

teṣāṁ tu devy-upasthānāt pratyādiṣṭāśiṣā sa ca

prādurbabhūva siddhārthaḥ sa-dāro harṣayan hariḥ

TRANSLATION

When the citizens had finished worshiping the demigoddess, she spoke to them in response, promising to grant their request. Just then Lord Kṛṣṇa, who had achieved His purpose, appeared before them in the company of His new wife, filling them with joy.

COMMENTARY

When the Dvārakāvāsīs finished worshiping Devī, she gave (*pratyādiṣṭa:dattāḥ*) a blessing, "You will see Kṛṣṇa." However, if we substitute the word *āsavāḥ* (senses) for *āsiṣāḥ* (benediction), the verse means, "Kṛṣṇa, who is the dearmost object of everyone's senses, appeared."

|| 10.56.37 ||

upalabhya hṛṣīkeśaṁ mṛtaṁ punar ivāgatam

saha patnyā maṇi-grīvaṁ sarve jāta-mahotsavāḥ

TRANSLATION

Seeing Lord Hṛṣīkeśa return as if from death, accompanied by His new wife and wearing the Syamantaka jewel on His neck, all the people were roused to jubilation.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa was wearing the jewel which Jāmbavān had placed on His neck when offering his daughter in marriage.

|| 10.56.38 ||

satrājitaṁ samāhūya sabhāyāṁ rāja-sannidhau

prāptiṁ cākhyāya bhagavān maṇiṁ tasmai nyavedayat

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa summoned Satrājit to the royal assembly. There, in the presence of King Ugrasena, Kṛṣṇa announced the recovery of the jewel and then formally presented it to Satrājit.

|| 10.56.39 ||

sa cāti-vrīḍito ratnaṁ gṛhītvāvāṅ-mukhas tataḥ

anutapyamāno bhavanam agamat svena pāpmanā

TRANSLATION

Hanging his head in great shame, Satrājit took the gem and returned home, all the while feeling remorse for his sinful behavior.

COMMENTARY

Satrājit was repentent (*anutapyamānaḥ*) for his offensive behavior.

|| 10.56.40-42 ||

so 'nudhyāyaṁs tad evāghaṁ balavad-vigrahākulaḥ

kathaṁ mṛjāmy ātma-rajaḥ prasīded vācyutaḥ katham

kim kṛtvā sādhu mahyaṁ syān na śaped vā jano yathā

adīrgha-darśanaṁ kṣudraṁ mūḍhaṁ draviṇa-lolupam

dāsye duhitaraṁ tasmai strī-ratnaṁ ratnam eva ca

upāyo 'yaṁ samīcīnas tasya śāntir na cānyathā

TRANSLATION

Pondering over his grievous offense and worried about the possibility of conflict with the Lord's mighty devotees, King Satrājit thought, "How can I cleanse myself of my contamination, and how may Lord Acyuta become satisfied with me? What can I do to regain my good fortune and avoid being cursed by the populace for being so short-sighted, miserly, foolish and avaricious? I shall give my daughter, the jewel of all women, to the Lord, together with the Syamantaka jewel. That, indeed, is the only proper way to pacify Him."

COMMENTARY

Satrājit was worried that the mighty followers of Kṛṣṇa would react inimically (*vigrahaḥ:virodhaḥ*) toward him. His meditation on this matter is described in two and a half verses.

|| 10.56.43 ||

evaṁ vyavasito buddhyā satrājit sva-sutāṁ śubhām

maṇiṁ ca svayam udyamya kṛṣṇāyopajahāra ha

TRANSLATION

Having thus intelligently made up his mind, King Satrājit personally arranged to present Lord Kṛṣṇa with his fair daughter and the Syamantaka jewel.

|| 10.56.44 ||

tāṁ satyabhāmāṁ bhagavān upayeme yathā-vidhi

bahubhir yācitāṁ śīla-rūpaudārya-guṇānvitām

TRANSLATION

The Lord married Satyabhāmā in proper religious fashion. Possessed of excellent behavior, along with beauty, broad-mindedness and all other good qualities, she had been sought by many men.

|| 10.56.45 ||

bhagavān āha na maṇiṁ pratīcchāmo vayaṁ nṛpa

tavāstāṁ deva-bhaktasya vayaṁ ca phala-bhāginaḥ

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Personality of Godhead told Satrājit: We do not care to take this jewel back, O King. You are the sun-god's devotee, so let it stay in your possession. Thus We will also enjoy its benefits.

COMMENTARY

With a touch of irony, Kṛṣṇa said, "After all, you are a devotee of the sun-god (*deva-bhaktasya*), so let the jewel remain with you. Since you are without a son, Satyabhāmā is your greatest treasure, and now that treasure is Mine!"

Thus ends the commentary on the Fifty Sixth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Fifty-seven

Satrājit Murdered, the Jewel Returned

|| 10.57.1 ||

śrī-bādarāyaṇir uvāca

vijñātārtho ’pi govindo dagdhān ākarṇya pāṇḍavān

kuntīṁ ca kulya-karaṇe saha-rāmo yayau kurūn

TRANSLATION

Śrī Bādarāyaṇi said: Although Lord Govinda was fully aware of what had actually occurred, when He heard reports that the Pāṇḍavas and Queen Kuntī had burned to death, He went with Lord Balarāma to the kingdom of the Kurus to fulfill the family obligations expected of Him.

COMMENTARY

In this chapter Satrājit is murdered, Kṛṣṇa kills Śatadhanvā and receives the Syamantaka jewel from Akrūra.

Since the jewel was the cause of Satrājit’s death, one learns that the object which ordinarily protects one can also kill him, if one offends Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa was quite aware that the Pāṇḍavas had escaped the assassination plot of Duryodhana. Yet upon hearing that Kuntī and the Pāṇḍavas were burned, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma went to the Kurus to perform the necessary rites.

|| 10.57.2 ||

bhīṣmaṁ kṛpaṁ sa viduraṁ gāndhārīṁ droṇam eva ca

tulya-duḥkhau ca saṅgamya hā kaṣṭam iti hocatuḥ

TRANSLATION

The two Lords met with Bhīṣma, Kṛpa, Vidura, Gāndhārī and Droṇa. Showing sorrow equal to theirs, They cried out, "Alas, how painful this is!"

|| 10.57.3 ||

labdhvaitad antaraṁ rājan śatadhanvānam ūcatuḥ

akrūra-kṛtavarmāṇau maniḥ kasmān na gṛhyate

TRANSLATION

Taking advantage of this opportunity, O King, Akrūra and Kṛtavarmā went to Śatadhanvā and said, "Why not take the Syamantaka jewel?"

COMMENTARY

Taking advantage of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma's absence from Dvārakā, Akrūra and Kṛtavarmā went to Śatadhanvā and flattered him saying, "You are much braver than we are, so you should kill Satrājit."

|| 10.57.4 ||

yo 'smabhyaṁ sampratiśrutya kanyā-ratnaṁ vigarhya naḥ

kṛṣṇāyādān na satrājit kasmād bhrātaram anviyāt

TRANSLATION

"Satrājit promised his jewellike daughter to us but then gave her to Kṛṣṇa instead, contemptuously neglecting us. So why should Satrājit not follow his brother's path?"

COMMENTARY

In this verse Akrūra and Kṛtavarmā speak of Satrājit's faults. According to previous statements in the *Bhāgavatam*, many suitors requested Satyabhāmā as their bride, and Satrājit had promised her to each one. "Should he not follow his brother Prasena to death because of this?"

However, senior commentators say that Akrūra and Kṛtavarmā, two great devotees of the Lord, were furious with Satrājit because he had insulted Kṛṣṇa and spread false rumors about Him in Dvārakā. Therefore, they instigated Śatadhanvā to kill him.

|| 10.57.5 ||

evaṁ bhinna-matis tābhyāṁ satrājitam asattamaḥ

śayānam avadhīl lobhāt sa pāpaḥ kṣīṇa jīvitaḥ

TRANSLATION

His mind thus influenced by their advice, wicked Śatadhanvā murdered Satrājit in his sleep simply out of greed. In this way the sinful Śatadhanvā shortened his own life span.

COMMENTARY

With his mind confused (*bhinna-matis*) by Akrūra and Kṛtavarmā, Śatadhanvā, out of greed for the jewel, killed Satrājit while he was sleeping. The word *asattamaḥ* (most wicked) indicates that Śatadhanvā was basically evil-minded and a firm hater of Satrājit.

|| 10.57.6 ||

strīṇāṁ vikrośamānānāṁ krandantīnām anātha-vat

hatvā paśūn saunika-van maṇim ādāya jagmivān

TRANSLATION

As the women of Satrājit's palace screamed and helplessly wept, Śatadhanvā took the jewel and left, like a butcher after he has killed some animals.

|| 10.57.7 ||

satyabhāmā ca pitaraṁ hataṁ vīkṣya śucārpitā

vyalapat tāta tāteti hā hatāsmīti muhyatī

TRANSLATION

When Satyabhāmā saw her dead father, she was plunged into grief. Lamenting "My father, my father! Oh, I am killed!" she fell unconscious.

|| 10.57.8 ||

taila-droṇyāṁ mṛtaṁ prāsya jagāma gajasāhvayam

kṛṣṇāya viditārthāya taptācakhyau pitur vadham

TRANSLATION

Queen Satyabhāmā put her father's corpse in a large vat of oil and went to Hastināpura, where she sorrowfully told Lord Kṛṣṇa, who was already aware of the situation, about her father's murder.

COMMENTARY

Why did Satyabhāmā go to Hastināpura? People said that since her husband was the Supreme Lord, she could have Him bring her father back to life. For that reason Satyabhāmā went to Hastināpura, and not out of affection for her father, because her father disliked Kṛṣṇa. By her grieving (*tapta*) Satyabhāmā was encouraging Kṛṣṇa to appear to show grief as well.

|| 10.57.9 ||

tad ākarṇyeśvarau rājann anusṛtya nṛ-lokatām

aho naḥ paramaṁ kaṣṭam ity asrākṣau vilepatuḥ

TRANSLATION

When Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Balarāma heard this news, O King, They exclaimed, "Alas! This is the greatest tragedy for Us!" Thus imitating the ways of human society, They lamented, Their eyes brimming with tears.

COMMENTARY

After hearing her words, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma made a show of lamentation just to satisfy the public, but They did not shed any real tears.

|| 10.57.10 ||

āgatya bhagavāṁs tasmāt sa-bhāryaḥ sāgrajaḥ puram

śatadhanvānam ārebhe hantuṁ hartuṁ maṇiṁ tataḥ

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord returned to His capital with His wife and elder brother. After arriving in Dvārakā, He readied Himself to kill Śatadhanvā and retrieve the jewel from him.

COMMENTARY

When Satyabhāmā returned to Dvārakā she told her relatives that Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma had tearfully lamented, “We cannot bring Satrājit back to life.”

|| 10.57.11 ||

so ’pi kṛtodyamaṁ jñātvā bhītaḥ prāṇa-parīpsayā

sāhāyye kṛtavarmāṇam ayācata sa cābravīt

TRANSLATION

Upon learning that Lord Kṛṣṇa was preparing to kill him, Śatadhanvā was struck with fear. To save his life he approached Kṛtavarmā and begged him for help, but Kṛtavarmā replied as follows.

|| 10.57.12-13 ||

nāham īsvarayoḥ kuryāṁ helanaṁ rāma-kṛṣṇayoḥ

ko nu kṣemāya kalpeta tayor vṛjinam ācaran

kaṁsaḥ sahānugo ’pīto yad-dveṣāt tyājitaḥ śriyā

jarāsandhaḥ saptadaśa- saṁyugād viratho gataḥ

TRANSLATION

[Kṛtavarmā said:] I dare not offend the Supreme Lords, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. Indeed, how can one who troubles Them expect any good fortune? Kaṁsa and all his followers lost both their wealth and their lives because of enmity toward Them, and after battling Them seventeen times Jarāsandha was left without even a chariot.

COMMENTARY

Kṛtavarmā told Śatadhanvā, "Indeed, I instigated you to murder Satrājit, but not out of enmity towards Kṛṣṇa. However, if you do not want to surrender to Kṛṣṇa, why should I follow you and also go against the Lord?"

Kṛtavarmā said, "Kaṁsa and his followers died (*apītaḥ*) and thus lost their wealth." Or the sentence can mean, "Kaṁsa and his company were already dead because of their enmity towards the Lord, and they were also rejected by Lakṣmī. Kṛṣṇa defeated Jarāsandha in seventeen battles."

|| 10.57.14 ||

pratyākhyātaḥ sa cākrūraṁ pārṣṇi-grāham ayācata

so 'py āha ko virudhyeta vidvān īśvarayor balam

TRANSLATION

His appeal refused, Śatadhanvā went to Akrūra and begged him for protection. But Akrūra similarly told him, "Who would oppose the two Personalities of Godhead if he knew Their strength?"

|| 10.57.15 ||

ya idaṁ līlayā viśvaṁ sṛjaty avati hanti ca

ceṣṭāṁ viśva-sṛjo yasya na vidur mohitājayā

TRANSLATION

“It is the Supreme Lord who creates, maintains and destroys this universe simply as His pastime. The cosmic creators cannot even understand His purpose, bewildered as they are by His illusory Māyā.”

COMMENTARY

Akrūra’s use of the singular *yaḥ*, “He who,” indicates that the frequent references to “the two Lords, Kṛṣṇa and Rāma,” do not compromise the fact there is one Supreme Godhead, one Absolute Truth, who appears in His original form as Kṛṣṇa. The irregular connection (*sandhi*) of the phrase *mohita ājayā* to *mohitājayā* is poetic license.

|| 10.57.16 ||

yaḥ sapta-hāyanaḥ śailam utpāṭyaikena pāṇinā

dadhāra līlayā bāla ucchilīndhram ivārbhakaḥ

TRANSLATION

“As a child of seven, Kṛṣṇa uprooted an entire mountain and held it aloft as easily as a young boy picks up a mushroom.”

|| 10.57.17 ||

namas tasmai bhagavate kṛṣṇāyādbhuta-karmaṇe

anantāyādi-bhūtāya kūṭa-sthāyātmane namaḥ

TRANSLATION

“I offer my obeisances to that Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, whose every deed is amazing. He is the Supreme Soul, the unlimited source and fixed center of all existence.”

|| 10.57.18 ||

pratyākhyātaḥ sa tenāpi śatadhanvā mahā-maṇim

tasmin nyasyāśvam āruhya śata-yojana-gaṁ yayau

TRANSLATION

His appeal thus rejected by Akrūra also, Śatadhanvā placed the precious jewel in Akrūra's care and fled on a horse that could travel one hundred yojanas [eight hundred miles].

COMMENTARY

The term *nyasya* "leaving in the care of" implies Śatadhanvā now believed the jewel was his; thus he left it in the care of his friend, Akrūra. The special quality of the horse was its ability to run for hundreds of miles in an emergency. It will be stated that the horse went with great difficulty all the way from Dvārakā to a garden on the outskirts of Mithilā and then died of exhaustion.

|| 10.57.19 ||

garuḍa-dhvajam āruhya rathaṁ rāma-janārdanau

anvayātāṁ mahā-vegair aśvai rājan guru-druham

TRANSLATION

My dear King, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma mounted Kṛṣṇa's chariot, which flew the flag of Garuḍa and was yoked with tremendously swift horses, and pursued Their elder's murderer.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma pursued Śatadhanvā, the killer of their father-in-law (*guru*).

|| 10.57.20 ||

mithilāyām upavane visṛjya patitaṁ hayam

padbhyām adhāvat santrastaḥ kṛṣṇo 'py anvadravad ruṣā

TRANSLATION

In a garden on the outskirts of Mithilā, the horse Śatadhanvā was riding collapsed. Terrified, he abandoned the horse and began to flee on foot, with Kṛṣṇa in angry pursuit.

|| 10.57.21 ||

padāter bhagavāṁs tasya padātis tigma-neminā

cakreṇa śira utkṛtya vāsasor vyacinon maṇim

TRANSLATION

As Śatadhanvā fled on foot, the Supreme Lord, also going on foot, cut off his head with His sharp-edged disc. The Lord then searched Śatadhanvā's upper and lower garments for the Syamantaka jewel.

COMMENTARY

Though Kṛṣṇa, being omniscient, knew that Akrūra had the jewel, He made a show of searching for it in order to confuse Balarāma who was observing from a distance. By doing this Kṛṣṇa was able to separate Himself from Balarāma, so that Balarāma could give mercy to His pure devotee King Bahulāśva in Mithilā.

|| 10.57.22 ||

alabdha-maṇir āgatya kṛṣṇa āhāgrajāntikam

vṛthā hataḥ śatadhanur maṇis tatra na vidyate

TRANSLATION

Not finding the jewel, Lord Kṛṣṇa went to His elder brother and said, "We have killed Śatadhanvā uselessly. The jewel isn't here."

|| 10.57.23 ||

tata āha balo nūnaṁ sa maṇiḥ śatadhanvanā

kasmiṁścit puruṣe nyastas tam anveṣa puraṁ vraja

TRANSLATION

To this Lord Balarāma replied, "Indeed, Śatadhanvā must have placed the jewel in the care of someone. You should return to Our city and find that person."

|| 10.57.24 ||

ahaṁ vaideham icchāmi draṣṭuṁ priyatamaṁ mama

ity uktvā mithilāṁ rājan viveśa yada-nandanaḥ

TRANSLATION

“I wish to visit King Videha, who is most dear to Me.” O King, having said this, Lord Balarāma, the beloved descendant of Yadu, entered the city of Mithilā.

COMMENTARY

Thinking that “Even though Kṛṣṇa is omniscient, He is acting like this to fool Me,” Balarāma concealed His anger because He was supposed to be bewildered by Kṛṣṇa, and spoke this verse. Balarāma said, “Now I would like visit Mithilā. You return to Dvārakā and give the jewel to Your beloved, but I will stay here.”

|| 10.57.25 ||

taṁ dṛṣṭvā sahasotthāya maithilaḥ prīta-mānasaḥ

arhayāṁ āsa vidhi-vad arhaṇīyaṁ samarhaṇaiḥ

TRANSLATION

The King of Mithilā immediately rose from his seat when he saw Lord Balarāma approaching. With great love the King honored the supremely worshipable Lord by offering Him elaborate worship, as stipulated by scriptural injunctions.

COMMENTARY

Balarāma was respected by the king.

|| 10.57.26 ||

uvāsa tasyāṁ katicin mithilāyāṁ samā vibhuḥ

mānitaḥ prīti-yuktena janakena mahātmanā

tato ’śikṣad gadāṁ kāle dhārtarāṣṭraḥ suyodhanaḥ

TRANSLATION

The almighty Lord Balarāma stayed in Mithilā for several years, honored by His affectionate devotee Janaka Mahārāja. During that time Dhṛtarāṣṭra's son Duryodhana learned from Balarāma the art of fighting with a club.

|| 10.57.27 ||

keśavo dvārakām etya nidhanaṁ śatadhanvanaḥ

aprāptiṁ ca maṇeḥ prāha priyāyāḥ priya-kṛd vibhuḥ

TRANSLATION

Lord Keśava arrived in Dvārakā and described the demise of Śatadhanvā and His own failure to find the Syamantaka jewel. He spoke in a way that would please His beloved, Satyabhāmā.

COMMENTARY

Keśava comforted his beloved (*priyāyāḥ priya-kṛd*) by affectionately saying, "I was unable to revive your father because he had a short lifespan, but I have killed his murderer with My own hands."

|| 10.57.28 ||

tataḥ sa kārayām āsa kriyā bandhor hatasya vai

sākaṁ suhṛdbhir bhagavān yā yāḥ syuḥ sāmparāyikīḥ

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa then had the various funeral rites performed for His deceased relative, Satrājit. The Lord attended the funeral along with well-wishers of the family.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa personally performed the funeral rites for His relative (*bandhor*), Satrājit.

|| 10.57.29 ||

akrūraḥ kṛtavarmā ca śrutvā śatadhanor vadham

vyūṣatur bhaya-vitrastau dvārakāyāḥ prayojakau

TRANSLATION

When Akrūra and Kṛtavarmā, who had originally incited Śatadhanvā to commit his crime, heard that he had been killed, they fled Dvārakā in terror and took up residence elsewhere.

COMMENTARY

Akrūra and Kṛtavarmā quickly fled from Dvārakā and went somewhere else, because they had inspired (*prayojakau*) Śatadhanvā to murder Satrājit.

|| 10.57.30 ||

akrūre proṣite 'riṣṭāny āsan vai dvārakaukasām

śārīrā mānasās tāpā muhur daivika-bhautikāḥ

TRANSLATION

In Akrūra's absence ill omens arose in Dvārakā, and the citizens began to suffer continually from physical and mental distresses, as well as from disturbances caused by higher powers and by creatures of the earth.

|| 10.57.31 ||

ity aṅgopadiśanty eke vismṛtya prāg udāhṛtam

muni-vāsa-nivāse kiṁ ghaṭetāriṣṭa-darśanam

TRANSLATION

Some men proposed [that the troubles were due to Akrūra's absence], but they had forgotten the glories of the Supreme Lord, which they themselves had so often described. Indeed, how can calamities occur in a place where the Personality of Godhead, the residence of all the sages, resides?

COMMENTARY

Due to his offense of taking Kṛṣṇa away from the Vrajagopīs, Akrūra was forced to live in Kāśī (Benares) among Kṛṣṇa's enemies to suffer in separation from his worshipable Lord. As many years as Baladeva stayed in Mithilā, Akrūra stayed in Kāśī. Hearing how

Akrūra was giving charity to many *brāhmaṇas* and doing sacrifices on a gold altar, the Dvārakāvāsīs gossiped that Kṛṣṇa, considering Akrūra a rival, had sent him into exile. Though Balarāma, Rukmiṇī and others did not believe the rumors, to dispel this new and in-credible stain on His reputation, Kṛṣṇa created various calamities in Dvārakā, thus inducing the citizens to call for Akrūra's return, which Kṛṣṇa then ordered.

After stating the sages' proposition that Dvārakā was suffering due to the influence of time mentioned in verse thirty, Śukadeva Gosvāmī refutes it in verse thirty-one. Some (*eke*) *munis* such as Vaiśampā-yana Ṛṣi, forgetting their previous words (*prāg udāhṛtam*) in praise of Kṛṣṇa, began to speak. The scriptures state that if even a single sage is living in a town, then by his influence there can be no calamities there. Therefore, what calamity can possibly arise in the abode where Kṛṣṇa, the shelter of all sages (*muni-vāsa*), is personally residing?

|| 10.57.32 ||

deve 'varṣati kāśīśaḥ śvaphalkāyāgatāya vai

sva-sutāṁ gāṇḍinīṁ prādāt tato 'varṣat sma kāśiṣu

TRANSLATION

[The elders said:] Previously, when Lord Indra had withheld rain from Kāsī [Benares], the king of that city gave his daughter Gāndinī to Śvaphalka, who was then visiting him. It soon rained in the kingdom of Kāśī.

COMMENTARY

Once when Indra (*deve*) withheld the rain from Kāśī, the king gave his daughter to Akrūra's father (Śvaphalka) in marriage. Then rain came. In his time of difficulty Akrūra went to Kāśī because of his relationship with his maternal grandfather, the King of Kāśī.

|| 10.57.33 ||

tat-sutas tat-prabhāvo 'sāv akrūro yatra yatra ha

devo 'bhivarṣate tatra nopatāpā na mārīkāḥ

TRANSLATION

Wherever his equally powerful son Akrūra stays, Lord Indra will provide sufficient rain. Indeed, that place will be free of miseries and untimely deaths.

|| 10.57.34 ||

iti vṛddha-vacaḥ śrutvā naitāvad iha kāraṇam

iti matvā samānāyya prāhākrūraṁ janārdanaḥ

TRANSLATION

Hearing these words from the elders, Lord Janārdana, though aware that the absence of Akrūra was not the only cause of the evil omens, had him summoned back to Dvārakā and spoke to him.

COMMENTARY

Hearing the words of the elders to bring back Akrūra, Kṛṣṇa thought within Himself, "Akrūra's absence is not the cause of the calamity, but rather My own desire is the real cause," and then had Akrūra brought back from Kāśī.

|| 10.57.35-36 ||

pūjayitvābhibhāṣyainaṁ kathayitvā priyāḥ kathāḥ

vijñātākhila-citta jñaḥ smayamāna uvāca ha

nanu dāna-pate nyastas tvayy āste śatadhanvanā

syamantako maniḥ śrīmān viditaḥ pūrvam eva naḥ

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa honored Akrūra, greeted him confidentially and spoke pleasant words with him. Then the Lord, who was fully aware of Akrūra's heart by virtue of His being the knower of everything, smiled and addressed him: "O master of charity, surely the opulent Syamantaka jewel was left in your care by Śatadhanvā and is still with you. Indeed, We have known this all along."

COMMENTARY

The Supersoul knows everyone's heart, but Kṛṣṇa knows all the Supersouls (*vijñatākhila-citta jñah*). Therefore what is so remarkable if Kṛṣṇa knows Akrūra's heart? Thus Kṛṣṇa was smiling as He said, "You had no enmity against Satrājit, nor did you steal the jewel. Moreover, you are not greedy for wealth. Rather you are My exalted devotee. I know even the Supersoul who resides within you, so why are you afraid of Me?"

(Text 36) Kṛṣṇa said, "What then can I ask in this regard, since I already know everything?"

|| 10.57.37 ||

satrājito 'napatyatvād gṛhṇīyur duhituḥ sutāḥ

dāyaṁ ninīyāpaḥ piṇḍān vimucyarṇaṁ ca śeṣitam

TRANSLATION

"Since Satrājit had no sons, his daughter's sons should receive his inheritance. They should pay for memorial offerings of water and piṇḍa, clear their grandfather's outstanding debts and keep the remainder of the inheritance for themselves."

COMMENTARY

Satrājit had no sons (*anapatyatvā:aputratvāt*), his wives all died along with him, and his daughter Satyabhāmā was not interested in the Syamantaka jewel, which constituted the inheritance, although it rightfully belonged to her sons. After offering water and *piṇḍa* to their maternal grandfather and clearing his debts, Satyabhāmā's sons should accept the jewel.

The law of inheritance is defined in the *Smrti* scriptures:

> *patnī duhitaraś caiva pitaro bhrātaras tathā*
> *tat-sutā gotra-jā bandhuḥ śiṣyāḥ sa-brahmacāriṇaḥ*

> "The inheritance goes first to the wife, then [if the wife has passed away] to the daughters, then to the parents, then to the brothers, then to the brothers' sons,

then to family members of the same *gotra* as the deceased, and then to his disciples, including *brahmacārīs*."

|| 10.57.38-39 ||

tathāpi durdharas tv anyais tvayy āstāṁ su-vrate maṇiḥ

kintu mām agrajaḥ samyaṅ na pratyeti maṇiṁ prati

darśayasva mahā-bhāga bandhūnāṁ śāntim āvaha

avyucchinnā makhās te 'dya vartante rukma-vedayaḥ

TRANSLATION

"Nevertheless, the jewel should remain in your care, O trustworthy Akrūra, because no one else can keep it safely. But please show the jewel just once, since My elder brother does not fully believe what I have told Him about it. In this way, O most fortunate one, you will pacify My relatives. [Everyone knows you have the jewel, for] you are now continually performing sacrifices on altars of gold."

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, "All the Dvārakāvāsīs know that you have the jewel. The evidence is your constant performance of sacrifices in Kāśī on altars of gold."

|| 10.57.40 ||

evaṁ sāmabhir ālabdhaḥ śvaphalka-tanayo maṇim

ādāya vāsasācchannaḥ dadau sūrya-sama-prabham

TRANSLATION

Thus shamed by Lord Kṛṣṇa's conciliatory words, the son of Śvaphalka brought out the jewel from where he had concealed it in his clothing and gave it to the Lord. The brilliant gem shone like the sun.

COMMENTARY

Being gently scolded by Kṛṣṇa, Akrūra then gave the jewel to Kṛṣṇa, who touched it with His hand and returned it to him.

|| 10.57.41 ||

syamantakaṁ darśayitvā jñātibhyo raja ātmanaḥ

vimṛjya maṇinā bhūyas tasmai pratyarpayat prabhuḥ

TRANSLATION

After the almighty Lord had shown the Syamantaka jewel to His relatives, thus dispelling the false accusations against Him, He returned it to Akrūra.

|| 10.57.42 ||

yas tv etad bhagavata īśvarasya viṣṇor

vīryāḍhyaṁ vṛjina-haraṁ su-maṅgalaṁ ca

ākhyānaṁ paṭhati śṛṇoty anusmared vā

duṣkīrtiṁ duritam apohya yāti śāntim

TRANSLATION

This narration, rich with descriptions of the prowess of Lord Śrī Viṣṇu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, removes sinful reactions and bestows all auspiciousness. Anyone who recites, hears or remembers it will drive away his own infamy and sins and attain peace.

COMMENTARY

In this verse, Śukadeva Gosvāmī offers a benediction (*phala-śruti*) to all the readers of this narration: “Bad reputation and the sins (*duritam*) which caused it will be destroyed for one who hears this story.”

Thus ends the commentary on the Fifty Seventh Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Fifty-eight

Kṛṣṇa Marries Five Princesses

|| 10.58.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

ekadā pāṇḍavān draṣṭuṁ pratītān puruṣottamaḥ

indraprasthaṁ gataḥ śṛīmān yuyudhānādibhir vṛtaḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Once, the supremely opulent Personality of Godhead went to Indraprastha to visit the Pāṇḍavas, who had again appeared in public. Accompanying the Lord were Yuyudhāna and other associates.

COMMENTARY

In this chapter, Kṛṣṇa visits the Pāṇḍavas in Indraprastha and marries five brides: Kālindī, Mitravindā, Satyā, Bhadrā and Lakṣmaṇā. Seeing that the Pāṇḍavas had reappeared in the house of Drupada, Kṛṣṇa visited them with Sātyaki and others. Actually Kṛṣṇa visited His beloved devotees in Indraprastha for the purpose of marrying Kālindī, who had performed severe austerities to attain Him.

|| 10.58.2 ||

dṛṣṭvā tam āgataṁ pārthā mukundam akhileśvaram

uttasthur yugapad vīrāḥ prāṇā mukhyam ivāgatam

TRANSLATION

When the Pāṇḍavas saw that Lord Mukunda had arrived, those heroic sons of Pṛthā all stood up at once, like the senses responding to the return of the life air.

COMMENTARY

When consciousness returns to the unconscious body, the five senses spring to life and start functioning. Similarly, the five Pāṇḍavas (five senses:*prāṇās*) all stood up at once, enlivened at the return of their Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa (*prāṇā mukhyam*).

|| 10.58.3 ||

pariṣvajyācyutaṁ vīrā aṅga-saṅga-hatainasaḥ

sānurāga-smitaṁ vaktraṁ vīkṣya tasya mudaṁ yayuḥ

TRANSLATION

The heroes embraced Lord Acyuta, and the touch of His body freed them of sin. Looking at His affectionate, smiling face, they were overwhelmed with joy.

|| 10.58.4 ||

yudhiṣṭhirasya bhīmasya kṛtvā pādābhivandanam

phālgunaṁ parirabhyātha yamābhyāṁ cābhivanditaḥ

TRANSLATION

After the Lord bowed down at the feet of Yudhiṣṭhira and Bhīma and firmly embraced Arjuna, He accepted obeisances from the twin brothers, Nakula and Sahadeva.

COMMENTARY

The twins Nakula and Sahadeva offered obeisances while Kṛṣṇa stood. Sometimes the word *abhivanditaḥ* is used in place of *abhivandanam* (obeisances).

|| 10.58.5 ||

paramāsana āsīnaṁ kṛṣṇā kṛṣṇam aninditā

navoḍhā vrīḍitā kiñcic chanair etyābhyavandata

TRANSLATION

Faultless Draupadī, the Pāṇḍavas' newly married wife, slowly and somewhat timidly approached Lord Kṛṣṇa, who sat on an exalted seat, and offered Him her obeisances.

COMMENTARY

Queen Draupadī, who was so devoted to Kṛṣṇa that she herself was called Kṛṣṇā (the feminine form of the name), also greeted Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.58.6 ||

tathaiva sātyakiḥ pārthaiḥ pūjitaś cābhivanditaḥ

niṣasādāsane 'nye ca pūjitāḥ paryupāsata

TRANSLATION

Sātyaki also accepted a seat of honor after receiving worship and welcome from the Pāṇḍavas, and the Lord's other companions, being duly honored, sat down in various places.

COMMENTARY

Those accompanying Kṛṣṇa were also welcomed (*pūjitāḥ*) and seated. In an alternate reading *pūjitāḥ* means "they were seated by those who had offered respects (*namaskṛtaiḥ*) to them."

|| 10.58.7 ||

pṛthām samāgatya kṛtābhivādanas tayāti-hārdārdra-dṛśābhirambhitaḥ

āpṛṣṭavāṁs tāṁ kuśalaṁ saha-snuṣāṁ pitṛ-ṣvasāram paripṛṣṭa-bāndhavaḥ

TRANSLATION

The Lord then went to see His aunt, Queen Kuntī. He bowed down to her and she embraced Him, her eyes moist with great affection. Lord Kṛṣṇa inquired from her and her daughter-in-law, Draupadī, about their welfare, and they in turn questioned Him at length about His relatives [in Dvārakā].

COMMENTARY

Seeing Kuntī approaching with great eagerness to see Him, Kṛṣṇa rose at once from His seat, quickly went up to her and offered His obeisances. Her eyes moistened with extreme love (*ati-hārdena:ati-premṇā*), Kuntī embraced Kṛṣṇa and smelled His head. The *Amara-kośa* dictionary says: *premā vā priyatā hārdam*, "*Priyatā and hārdam* are synonyms for pure love (*prema*) of Kṛṣṇa."

The word *abhirambhitaḥ* (embraced) means that Kuntī embraced Kṛṣṇa while saying, "I worship Your face with millions of lamps of my *prāṇās* (vital energy)." As Kuntī smelled Kṛṣṇa's head, she asked about Vasudeva and His other relatives.

|| 10.58.8 ||

tam āha prema-vaiklavya-ruddha-kaṇṭhāśru-locanā

smarantī tān bahūn kleśān kleśāpāyātma-darśanam

TRANSLATION

So overcome by love that her throat choked up and her eyes filled with tears, Queen Kuntī remembered the many troubles she and her sons had endured. Thus she addressed Lord Kṛṣṇa, who appears before His devotees to drive away their distress

COMMENTARY

Kuntī spoke to Kṛṣṇa, the sight of whose body (*ātma-darśanam: anga-darśanena*) extinguishes (*apāya:nāsaḥ*) all misery.

|| 10.58.9 ||

tadaiva kuśalaṁ no 'bhūt sa-nāthās te kṛtā vayam

jñatīn naḥ smaratā kṛṣṇa bhrātā me preṣitas tvayā

TRANSLATION

[Queen Kuntī said:] My dear Kṛṣṇa, our welfare was assured only when You remembered us, Your relatives, and gave us Your protection by sending my brother to visit us.

COMMENTARY

"My brother (*bhrātā*)" refers to Akrūra.

|| 10.58.10 ||

na te 'sti sva-para-bhrāntir viśvasya suhṛd-ātmanaḥ

tathāpi smaratāṁ śaśvat kleśān haṁsi hṛdi sthitaḥ

TRANSLATION

For You, the well-wishing friend and Supreme Soul of the universe, there is never any illusion of "us" and "them." Yet even so, residing within the hearts of all, You eradicate the sufferings of those who remember You constantly.

COMMENTARY

Kuntī recollected the majesty (*aiśvarya*) of Kṛṣṇa, realizing her own insignificance: "Being the well-wishing Soul of the universe, You do not think in terms of self and others, friends and enemies. Though this is true, from within the heart You destroy the miseries of those who always remember You."

|| 10.58.11 ||

yudhiṣṭhira uvāca

kiṁ na ācaritaṁ śreyo na vedāham adhīśvara

yogeśvarāṇāṁ durdarśo yan no dṛṣṭaḥ ku-medhasām

TRANSLATION

King Yudhiṣṭhira said: O supreme controller, I do not know what pious deeds we fools have done so that we can see You, whom the masters of yogic perfection rarely see.

|| 10.58.12 ||

iti vai vārṣikān māsān rājñā so 'bhyarthitaḥ sukham

janayan nayanānandam indraprasthaukasāṁ vibhuḥ

TRANSLATION

Requested by the King to stay with them, the almighty Lord remained happily in Indraprastha during the months of the rainy season, giving joy to the eyes of the city's residents.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa stayed there happily.

|| 10.58.13-14 ||

ekadā ratham āruhya vijayo vānara-dhvajam

gāṇḍīvaṁ dhanur ādāya tūṇau cākṣaya-sāyakau

sākaṁ kṛṣṇena sannaddho vihartuṁ vipinaṁ mahat

bahu-vyāla-mṛgākīrṇaṁ prāviśat para-vīra-hā

TRANSLATION

Once Arjuna, the slayer of powerful enemies, donned his armor, mounted his chariot flying the flag of Hanumān, took up his bow and his two inexhaustible quivers, and went to sport with Lord Kṛṣṇa in a large forest filled with fierce animals.

COMMENTARY

“Once” (*ekadā*) means that this event took place after the burning of the Khāṇḍava forest, since Arjuna was now using the Gāṇḍīva bow and other weapons he had acquired during that incident.

|| 10.58.15 ||

tatrāvidhyac charair vyāghrān śūkarān mahiṣān rurūn

śarabhān gavayān khaḍgān hariṇān śaśa-śallakān

TRANSLATION

With his arrows Arjuna shot tigers, boars and buffalo in that forest, along with rurus, śarabhas, gavayas, rhinoceroses, black deer, rabbits and porcupines.

|| 10.58.16 ||

tān ninyuḥ kiṅkarā rājñe medhyān parvaṇy upāgate

tṛṭ-parītaḥ pariśrānto bibhatsur yamunām agāt

TRANSLATION

A crew of servants carried to King Yudhiṣṭhira the slain animals fit to be offered in sacrifice on some special occasion. Then, feeling thirsty and tired, Arjuna went to the bank of the Yamunā.

COMMENTARY

They presented the slain animals to King Yudhiṣṭhira to be used in the Vedic sacrifice. Bibhatsur is Arjuna.

|| 10.58.17 ||

tatropaspṛśya viśadaṁ pītvā vāri mahā-rathau

kṛṣṇau dadṛśatuḥ kanyāṁ carantīṁ cāru-darśanām

TRANSLATION

After the two Kṛṣṇas bathed there, they drank the river's clear water. The great warriors then saw an attractive young girl walking nearby.

|| 10.58.18 ||

tām āsādya varārohāṁ su-dvijāṁ rucirānanām

papraccha preṣitaḥ sakhyā phālgunaḥ pramadottamām

TRANSLATION

Sent by his friend, Arjuna approached the exceptional young woman, who possessed beautiful hips, fine teeth and a lovely face, and inquired from her as follows.

COMMENTARY

Arjuna was sent by Kṛṣṇa to inquire from Kālindī about her attachment to the Lord.

|| 10.58.19 ||

kā tvaṁ kasyāsi su-śroṇi kuto vā kiṁ cikīrṣasi

manye tvāṁ patim icchantīṁ sarvaṁ kathaya śobhane

TRANSLATION

[Arjuna said:] Who are you, O fine-waisted lady? Whose daughter are you, and where do you come from? What are you doing here? I think you must be looking for a husband. Please explain everything, O beautiful one.

|| 10.58.20 ||

śrī-kālindy uvāca

ahaṁ devasya savitur duhitā patim icchatī

viṣṇuṁ vareṇyaṁ vara-daṁ tapaḥ paramam āsthitaḥ

TRANSLATION

Śrī Kālindī said: I am the daughter of the sun-god. I desire to get as my husband the most excellent and munificent Lord Viṣṇu, and to that end I am performing severe penances.

COMMENTARY

The word *vareṇyam* (most choice) implies that, "I am doing penance because I want the very beautiful Viṣṇu, who can fulfill all my desires, as my husband."

|| 10.58.21 ||

nānyaṁ patiṁ vṛṇe vīra tam ṛte śrī-niketanam

tuṣyatāṁ me sa bhagavān mukundo 'nātha-saṁśrayaḥ

TRANSLATION

I will accept no husband other than Him, the abode of the goddess of fortune. May that Mukunda, the Supreme Personality, the shelter of the helpless, be pleased with me.

COMMENTARY

The beautiful Kālindī here reveals some apprehension as she speaks to negate any other person as her husband: "Viṣṇu is the shelter (*anātha-saṁśmsrayaḥ*), master and protector of His devotees. With this faith I live alone and am not afraid of any man, though I am a helpless young girl."

|| 10.58.22 ||

kālindīti samākhyātā vasāmi yamunā-jale

nirmite bhavane pitrā yāvad acyuta-darśanam

TRANSLATION

I am known as Kālindī, and I live in a mansion my father built for me within the water of the Yamunā. There I will stay until I meet Lord Acyuta.

COMMENTARY

Kālindī said, “I am well known as Kālindī. Who does not know me, the daughter of the sun-god?” By this statement Kālindī indicates her high status. “Out of affection for me, my father built me a mansion in the river, so who can dare act inimically to me?”

|| 10.58.23 ||

tathāvadad guḍākeśo vāsudevāya so ’pi tām

ratham āropya tad-vidvān dharma-rājam upāgamat

TRANSLATION

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Arjuna repeated all this to Lord Vāsudeva, who was already aware of it. The Lord then took Kālindī onto His chariot and went back to see King Yudhiṣṭhira.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said to Kālindī, “Ah, my dear beautiful one, I am your most desirable Lord Viṣṇu. You should recognize Me from the descrip-tions of Viṣṇu taught by your father, and by the ecstatic loving feelings (*bhāva*) arising within your pure heart.” After saying this, Kṛṣṇa lifted Kālindī onto His chariot because He knew (*tad-vidvān*) her mind right from the beginning.

|| 10.58.24 ||

yadaiva kṛṣṇaḥ sandiṣṭaḥ pārthānāṁ paramādbutam

kārayām āsa nagaraṁ vicitraṁ viśvakarmaṇā

TRANSLATION

[Describing a previous incident, Śukadeva Gosvāmī said:] Upon the request of the Pāṇḍavas, Lord Kṛṣṇa had Viśvakarmā build them a most wonderful and amazing city.

COMMENTARY

Indraprastha city was constructed before the burning of the Khāṇḍava forest and before Kṛṣṇa found His bride Kālindī.

|| 10.58.25 ||

bhagavāṁs tatra nivasan svānāṁ priya-cikīrṣayā

agnaye khāṇḍavaṁ dātum arjunasyāsa sārathiḥ

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord stayed in that city for some time to please His devotees. On one occasion, Śrī Kṛṣṇa wanted to give the Khāṇḍava forest as a gift to Agni, and so the Lord became Arjuna's charioteer.

COMMENTARY

The order of events is that first Visvakarma, under Kṛṣṇa's order, constructed a city for the Pāṇḍavas, then the Khāṇḍava forest was burned, then the assembly hall of the demigods was presented, and then Kṛṣṇa took the hand of Kālindī.

|| 10.58.26 ||

so 'gnis tuṣṭo dhanur adād dhayān śvetān rathaṁ nṛpa

arjunāyākṣayau tūṇau varma cābhedyam astribhiḥ

TRANSLATION

Being pleased, O King, Lord Agni presented Arjuna with a bow, a set of white horses, a chariot, a pair of inexhaustible quivers, and armor that no fighter could pierce with weapons.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa became Arjuna's chariot driver so that Arjuna could get his weapons. Khāṇḍava was a forest of Indra.

|| 10.58.27 ||

mayaś ca mocito vahneḥ sabhāṁ sakhya upāharat

yasmin duryodhanasyāsīj jala-sthala-dṛśi-bhramaḥ

TRANSLATION

When the demon Maya was saved from the fire by his friend Arjuna, Maya presented him with an assembly hall, in which Duryodhana would later mistake water for a solid floor.

COMMENTARY

Maya gave the assembly hall to Arjuna, his friend who saved him from the fire. Within that assembly hall Duryodhana later became bewildered.

|| 10.58.28 ||

sa tena samanujñātaḥ suhṛdbhiś cānumoditaḥ

āyayau dvārakāṁ bhūyaḥ sātyaki-pramakhair vṛtaḥ

TRANSLATION

Then Lord Kṛṣṇa, given leave by Arjuna and other well-wishing relatives and friends, returned to Dvārakā with Sātyaki and the rest of His entourage.

|| 10.58.29 ||

athopayeme kālindīṁ su-puṇya-rtv-ṛkṣa ūrjite

vitanvan paramānandaṁ svānāṁ parama-maṅgalaḥ

TRANSLATION

The supremely auspicious Lord then married Kālindī on a day when the season, the lunar asterism and the configurations of the sun and other heavenly bodies were all propitious. In this way He brought the greatest pleasure to His devotees.

|| 10.58.30 ||

vindyānuvindyāv āvantyau duryodhana-vaśānugau

svayaṁ-vare sva-bhaginīṁ kṛṣṇe saktāṁ nyaṣedhatām

TRANSLATION

Vindya and Anuvindya, who shared the throne of Avantī, were followers of Duryodhana's. When the time came for their sister [Mitravindā] to select her husband in the svayaṁvara ceremony, they forbade her to choose Kṛṣṇa, although she was attracted to Him.

COMMENTARY

Two verses describe Kṛṣṇa's marriage to Mitravindā, His fifth wife. Vinda and Anuvinda were two kings of Avantī.

|| 10.58.31 ||

rājādhidevyās tanayāṁ mitravindāṁ pitṛ-ṣvasuḥ

prasahya hṛtavān kṛṣṇo rājan rājñāṁ prapaśyatām

TRANSLATION

My dear King, Lord Kṛṣṇa forcibly took away Princess Mitravindā, the daughter of His aunt Rājādhidevī, before the eyes of the rival kings.

|| 10.58.32 ||

nagnajin nāma kauśalya āsīd rājāti-dhārmikaḥ

tasya satyābhavat kanyā devī nāgnajitī nṛpa

TRANSLATION

O King, Nagnajit, the very pious King of Kauśalya, had a lovely daughter named Satyā, or Nāgnajitī.

COMMENTARY

The sixth marriage is described. Nagnajit was the king of Ayodhya (Kauśalya). His daughter was called Satyā.

|| 10.58.33 ||

na tāṁ śekur nṛpā voḍhum ajitvā sapta-go-vṛṣān

tīkṣṇa-śṛṅgān su-durdharṣān vīrya-gandhāsahān khalān

TRANSLATION

The kings who came as suitors were not allowed to marry her unless they could subdue seven sharp-horned bulls. These bulls were extremely vicious and uncontrollable, and they could not tolerate even the smell of warriors.

COMMENTARY

Voḍhum means “to marry.”

|| 10.58.34 ||

tāṁ śrutvā vṛṣa-jil-labhyāṁ bhagavān sātvatāṁ patiḥ

jagāma kauśalya-puraṁ sainyena mahatā vṛtaḥ

TRANSLATION

When the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the master of the Vaiṣṇavas, heard of the princess who was to be won by the conqueror of the bulls, He went to the capital of Kauśalya with a large army.

COMMENTARY

No one could marry Satyā without taming seven ferocious bulls.

|| 10.58.35 ||

sa kośala-patiḥ prītaḥ pratyutthānāsanādibhiḥ

arhaṇenāpi guruṇā pūjayan pratinanditaḥ

TRANSLATION

The King of Kośala, pleased to see Lord Kṛṣṇa, worshiped Him by rising from his throne and offering Him a seat of honor and substantial gifts. Lord Kṛṣṇa also greeted the King respectfully.

COMMENTARY

The king worshiped Kṛṣṇa and He greeted him respectfully in return.

|| 10.58.36 ||

varaṁ vilokyābhimataṁ samāgataṁ narendra-kanyā cakame ramā-patim

bhūyād ayaṁ me patir āśiṣo 'nalaḥ karotu satyā yadi me dhṛto vrataḥ

TRANSLATION

When the King's daughter saw that most agreeable suitor arrive, she immediately desired to have Him, the Lord of Goddess Rāma. She prayed, "May He become my husband. If I have kept my vows, may the sacred fire bring about the fulfillment of my hopes."

COMMENTARY

Satyā saw (*vilokya*) Kṛṣṇa through the lattice windows of the palace watch tower.

|| 10.58.37 ||

yat-pāda-paṅkaja-rajaḥ śirasā bibharti

śrīr abya-jaḥ sa-giriśaḥ saha loka-pālaiḥ

līlā-tanuḥ sva-kṛta-setu-parīpsayā yaḥ

kāle 'dadhat sa bhagavān mama kena tuṣyet

TRANSLATION

"Goddess Lakṣmī, Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva and the rulers of the various planets place the dust of His lotus feet on their heads, and to protect the codes of religion, which He has created, He assumes pastime incarnations at various

times. How may that Supreme Personality of Godhead become pleased with me?"

COMMENTARY

Princess Satyā prayed, "How can I please that person who appears in various transcendental forms within this world whenever there is necessity of upholding the principles of religion. He is now present before me in His original spiritual form."

|| 10.58.38 ||

arcitaṁ punar ity āha nārāyaṇa jagat-pate

ātmānandena pūrṇasya karavāṇi kim alpakaḥ

TRANSLATION

King Nagnajit first worshiped the Lord properly and then addressed Him: "O Nārāyaṇa, Lord of the universe, You are full in Your own spiritual pleasure. Therefore what can this insignificant person do for You?"

|| 10.58.39 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

tam āha bhagavān hṛṣṭaḥ kṛtāsana-parigrahaḥ

megha-gambhīrayā vācā sa-smitaṁ kuru-nandana

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O beloved descendant of Kuru, the Supreme Lord was pleased, and after accepting a comfortable seat He smiled and addressed the King in a voice as deep as the rumbling of a cloud.

|| 10.58.40 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

narendra yācñā kavibhir vigarhitā rājanya-bandhor nija-dharma-vartinaḥ

tathāpi yāce tava sauhṛdecchayā kanyāṁ tvadīyāṁ na hi śulka-dā vayam

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord said: O ruler of men, learned authorities condemn begging for a person in the royal order who is executing his religious duties. Even so, desiring your friendship, I ask you for your daughter, though We offer no gifts in exchange.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “Even one who is an inferior *kṣatriya* (*rājanya-bandhor*) should not beg from another *kṣatriya*. Though I am the best of the royal order, I am asking for your daughter without offering a dowry (*sulka-dāḥ:dravyādi-dāyinaḥ*) in exchange.”

|| 10.58.41 ||

śrī-rājovāca

ko ’nyas te ’bhyadhiko nātha kanyā-vara ihepsitaḥ

guṇaika-dhāmno yasyāṅge śrīr vasaty anapāyinī

TRANSLATION

The King said: My Lord, who could be a better husband for my daughter than You, the exclusive abode of all transcendental qualities? On Your body the goddess of fortune herself resides, never leaving You for any reason.

|| 10.58.42 ||

kintv asmābhiḥ kṛtaḥ pūrvaṁ samayaḥ sātvatarṣabha

puṁsāṁ vīrya-parīkṣārthaṁ kanyā-vara-parīpsayā

TRANSLATION

But to ascertain the proper husband for my daughter, O chief of the Sātvatas, we previously set a condition to test the prowess of her suitors.

COMMENTARY

Here the king replies to Kṛṣṇa's statement, "We have no payment to give for the bride." The king said, "But I have made a rule (*samayaḥ:niyama*) to test the strength of any groom desiring my daughter as his bride. Otherwise all the kings would ask for her and how could I agree to all of them? The actual purpose in setting up this test, however, is to attain You as my son-in-law. For only You can subdue these wild bulls. Besides, without any doubt, You, whose outstanding beauty and character my daughter has already heard about, are the only desirable candidate for marrying her."

|| 10.58.43 ||

saptaite go-vṛṣā vīra durdāntā duravagrahāḥ

etair bhagnāḥ su-bahavo bhinna-gātrā nṛpātmajāḥ

TRANSLATION

These seven wild bulls are impossible to tame, O hero. They have defeated many princes, breaking their limbs.

|| 10.58.44 ||

yad ime nigṛhītāḥ syus tvayaiva yadu-nandana

varo bhavān abhimato duhitur me śriyaḥ-pate

TRANSLATION

If You can subdue them, O descendant of Yadu, You will certainly be the appropriate bridegroom for my daughter, O Lord of Śrī.

COMMENTARY

In this sentence *yad* means "if" but the true meaning is "because" (*yasmāt*). "Because You controlled the seven bulls, You can marry my daughter." By addressing Kṛṣṇa as the husband of Lakṣmī (*śriyaḥ-pate*), the king indicates, "This subduing of the bulls is not at all impossible for You. Thus You are already ascertained as the suitable groom. These bulls are enemies of Yours and have been put here for their being killed."

|| 10.58.45 ||

evaṁ samayam ākarṇya baddhvā parikaraṁ prabhuḥ

ātmānaṁ saptadhā kṛtvā nyagṛhṇāl līlayaiva tān

TRANSLATION

Upon hearing these terms, the Lord tightened His clothing, expanded Himself into seven forms and easily subdued the bulls.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa expanded Himself into seven forms (*ātmānaṁ saptadhā kṛtvā*) not only to playfully defeat the seven bulls but also to show Princess Satyā that she would not have to compete with His other queens, since He could enjoy with all of them simultaneously.

|| 10.58.46 ||

baddhvā tān dāmabhiḥ śaurir bhagna-darpān hataujasaḥ

vyakarsal līlayā baddhān bālo dāru-mayān yathā

TRANSLATION

Lord Śauri tied up the bulls, whose pride and strength were now broken, and pulled them with ropes just as a child playfully pulls wooden toy bulls.

|| 10.58.47 ||

tataḥ prītaḥ sutāṁ rājā dadau kṛṣṇāya vismitaḥ

tāṁ pratyagṛhṇād bhagavān vidhi-vat sadṛśīṁ prabhuḥ

TRANSLATION

Then King Nagnajit, pleased and astonished, presented his daughter to Lord Kṛṣṇa. The Supreme Personality of Godhead accepted this suitable bride in the proper Vedic fashion.

|| 10.58.48 ||

rāja-patnyaś ca duhituḥ kṛṣṇaṁ labdhvā priyaṁ patim

lebhire paramānandaṁ jātaś ca paramotsavaḥ

TRANSLATION

The King's wives felt the greatest ecstasy upon attaining Lord Kṛṣṇa as the dear husband of the royal princess, and a mood of great festivity arose.

|| 10.58.49 ||

śaṅkha-bhery-ānakā nedur gīta-vādya-dvijāśiṣaḥ

narā nāryaḥ pramuditāḥ suvāsaḥ-srag-alaṅkṛtāḥ

TRANSLATION

Conchshells, horns and drums resounded, along with vocal and instrumental music and the sounds of brāhmaṇas, invoking blessings. The joyful men and women adorned themselves with fine clothing and garlands.

|| 10.58.50-51 ||

daśa-dhenu-sahasrāṇi pāribarham adād vibhuḥ

yuvatīnāṁ tri-sāhasraṁ niṣka-grīva-suvāsasam

nava-nāga-sahasrāṇi nāgāc chata-guṇān rathān

rathāc chata-guṇān aśvān aśvāc chata-guṇān narān

TRANSLATION

As the dowry, powerful King Nagnajit gave ten thousand cows, three thousand young maidservants wearing golden ornaments on their necks and bedecked in fine clothing, nine thousand elephants, a hundred times as many chariots as elephants, a hundred times as many horses as chariots, and a hundred times as many manservants as horses.

COMMENTARY

The king gave Kṛṣṇa three thousand young women (*yuvatīnām*) as maidservants, who wore gold ornaments on their necks and beautiful clothing. In addition, he gave 9,000 elephants, 900,000 chariots, 90 million horses and 9 billion soldiers!

|| 10.58.52 ||

dampatī ratham āropya mahatyā senayā vṛtau

sneha-praklinna-hṛdayo yāpayām āsa kośalaḥ

TRANSLATION

The King of Kośala, his heart melting with affection, had the bride and groom seated on their chariot, and then he sent them on their way surrounded by a great army.

|| 10.58.53 ||

śrutvaitad rurudhur bhūpā nayantaṁ pathi kanyakām

bhagna-vīryāḥ su-durmarṣā yadubhir go-vṛṣaiḥ purā

TRANSLATION

When the intolerant kings who had been rival suitors heard what had happened, they tried to stop Lord Kṛṣṇa on the road as He took His bride home. But just as the bulls had broken the kings' strength before, the Yadu warriors broke it now.

COMMENTARY

Previously those kings had been defeated by the bulls. Now they were defeated by the Yadus.

|| 10.58.54 ||

tān asyataḥ śara-vrātān bandhu-priya-kṛd arjunaḥ

gāṇḍīvī kālayām āsa siṁhaḥ kṣudra-mṛgān iva

TRANSLATION

Arjuna, wielder of the Gāṇḍīva bow, was always eager to please his friend Kṛṣṇa, and thus he drove back those opponents, who were shooting torrents of arrows at the Lord. He did this just as a lion drives away insignificant animals.

COMMENTARY

Arjuna easily (kālayām āsa) dispatched them.

|| 10.58.55 ||

pāribarham upāgṛhya dvārakām etya satyayā

reme yadūnām ṛṣabho bhagavān devakī-sutaḥ

TRANSLATION

Lord Devakī-suta, the chief of the Yadus, then took His dowry and Satyā to Dvārakā and continued to live there happily.

|| 10.58.56 ||

śrutakīrteḥ sutāṁ bhadrāṁ upayeme pitṛ-ṣvasuḥ

kaikeyīṁ bhrātṛbhir dattāṁ kṛṣṇaḥ santardanādibhiḥ

TRANSLATION

Bhadrā was a princess of the Kaikeya kingdom and the daughter of Lord Kṛṣṇa's paternal aunt Śrutakīrti. The Lord married Bhadrā when her brothers, headed by Santardana, offered her to Him.

COMMENTARY

The seventh marriage is described. Bhadrā was the daughter of Śrutakīrti.

|| 10.58.57 ||

sutāṁ ca madrādhipater lakṣmaṇāṁ lakṣaṇair yatām

svayaṁ-vare jahāraikaḥ sa suparṇaḥ sudhām iva

TRANSLATION

Then the Lord married Lakṣmaṇā, the daughter of the King of Madra. Kṛṣṇa appeared alone at her svayaṁvara ceremony and took her away, just as Garuḍa once stole the demigods' nectar.

|| 10.58.58 ||

anyāś caivaṁ-vidhā bhāryāḥ kṛṣṇasyāsan sahasraśaḥ

bhaumaṁ hatvā tan-nirodhād āhṛtāś cāru-darśanāḥ

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa also acquired thousands of other wives equal to these when He killed Bhaumāsura and freed the beautiful maidens the demon was holding captive.

COMMENTARY

The word "thousands" (*sahasraśaḥ*) means 16,000 beautiful maidens.

Thus ends the commentary on the Fifty Eighth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Fifty-nine

The Killing of the Demon Naraka

|| 10.59.1 ||

śrī-rājovāca

yathā hato bhagavatā bhaumo yene ca tāḥ striyaḥ

niruddhā etad ācakṣva vikramaṁ śārṅga-dhanvanaḥ

TRANSLATION

[King Parīkṣit said:] How was Bhaumāsura, who kidnapped so many women, killed by the Supreme Lord? Please narrate this adventure of Lord Śārṅgadhanvā's.

COMMENTARY

In this chapter, Kṛṣṇa kills the demon Narakāsura (Bhaumāsura), the son of Bhūmi, at the request of Indra, and marries the 16,000 daughters of kings who were held captive by Narakāsura. Kṛṣṇa also brings the *pārijāta* tree from Svargaloka.

|| 10.59.2-3 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

indreṇa hṛta-chatreṇa hṛta-kuṇḍala-bandhunā

hṛtāmarādri-sthānena jñāpito bhauma-ceṣṭitam

sa-bhāryo garuḍārūḍhaḥ prāg-jyotiṣa-puraṁ yayau

giri-durgaiḥ śastra-durgair jalāgny-anila-durgamam

mura-pāśāyutair ghorair dṛḍhaiḥ sarvata āvṛtam

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: After Bhauma had stolen the earrings belonging to Indra's mother, along with Varuṇa's umbrella and the demigods' playground at the peak of Mandara mountain, Indra went to Lord Kṛṣṇa and informed Him of these misdeeds. The Lord, taking His wife Satyabhāmā with Him, then rode on Garuḍa to Prāgyotiṣa-pura, which was surrounded on all sides by fortifications consisting of hills, unmanned weapons, water, fire and wind, and by obstructions of mura-pāśa wire.

COMMENTARY

The umbrella actually belonged to Varuṇa, but because of Indra's superior position as the king of the demigods, the verse mentioned that it was stolen from Indra. Being informed about the activities of Bhauma by Indra, whose umbrella, mother's earrings and jewel mountain were stolen, Kṛṣṇa went to Prāgjyotiṣa-pura, Bhauma's capital, with His wife Satyabhāmā. [Bhauma's capital still exists today as Tejpur in Assam]

Why did Kṛṣṇa bring His wife along? Kṛṣṇa had promised Bhūmi that He would not kill her demoniac son without her permission. Since Bhūmi is an expansion of Satyabhāmā, the later could authorize Kṛṣṇa to kill the unusually nasty Bhaumāsura if necessary during the heat of the battle. Kṛṣṇa took Satyabhāmā along for this purpose. In addition, Satyabhāmā had been miffed when Nārada Muni brought a heavenly *pārijāta* flower to Queen Rukmiṇī. At that time Kṛṣṇa promised Satyabhāmā, "I will give you a whole tree of these flowers." Therefore Kṛṣṇa brought Satyabhāmā along to show her that He could take the tree from Indra.

|| 10.59.4 ||

gadayā nirbibhedādrīn śastra-durgāṇi sāyakaiḥ

cakreṇāgniṁ jalaṁ vāyuṁ mura-pāśāṁs tathāsinā

TRANSLATION

With His club the Lord broke through the rock fortifications; with His arrows, the weapon fortifications; with His disc, the fire, water and wind fortifications; and with His sword, the mura-pāśa cables.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa used His *cakra* to destroy the walls of water, fire and wind.

|| 10.59.5 ||

śaṅkha-nādena yantrāṇi hṛdayāni manasvinām

prākāraṁ gadayā gurvyā nirbibheda gadādharaḥ

TRANSLATION

With the sound of His conchshell Lord Gadādhara then shattered the magic seals of the fortress, along with the hearts of its brave defenders, and with His heavy club He demolished the surrounding earthen ramparts.

COMMENTARY

With the sound of His conch Kṛṣṇa pierced the mystic armor (*yantrāṇi*) protecting the hearts of the warriors.

|| 10.59.6 ||

pāñcajanya-dhvaniṁ śrutvā yugāntaśani-bhīṣaṇam

muraḥ śayāna uttasthau daityaḥ pañca-śirā jalāt

TRANSLATION

The five-headed demon Mura, who slept at the bottom of the city's moat, awoke and rose up out of the water when he heard the vibration of Lord Kṛṣṇa's Pāñcajanya conchshell, a sound as terrifying as the thunder at the end of the cosmic age.

COMMENTARY

The word *aśani* (thunderbolt) compares the sound of Kṛṣṇa's conchshell, which woke up the sleeping demon Mura, with the fearful sound of the thunderbolts at the time of universal devastation. The word *aśani* was also used earlier to describe how the wrestlers at Kaṁsa's arena saw Kṛṣṇa as a terrifying thunderbolt: *mallānām aśanir* (10.43.17).

|| 10.59.7 ||

tri-śūlam udyamya su-durnirīkṣaṇo yugānta-sūryānala-rocir ulbaṇaḥ

grasaṁs tri-lokīm iva pañcabhir mukhair abhyadravat tārkṣya-sutaṁ yathoragaḥ

TRANSLATION

Shining with the blinding, terrible effulgence of the sun's fire at the end of a millennium, Mura seemed to be swallowing up the three worlds with his five mouths. He lifted up his trident and fell upon Garuḍa, the son of Tārkṣya, like an attacking snake.

|| 10.59.8 ||

āvidhya śūlaṁ tarasā garutmate nirasya vaktrair vyanadat sa pañcabhiḥ

sa rodasī sarva-diśo 'mbaraṁ mahān āpūrayann aṇḍa-kaṭāham āvṛṇot

TRANSLATION

Mura whirled his trident and then hurled it fiercely at Garuḍa, roaring from all five mouths. The sound filled the earth and sky, all directions and the limits of outer space, until it reverberated against the very shell of the universe.

COMMENTARY

The Mura demon waved his trident and made ferocious sounds (*vyanada*) that filled the universe.

|| 10.59.9 ||

tadāpatad vai tri-śikhaṁ garutmate hariḥ śarābhyām abhinat tridhojasā

mukheṣu taṁ cāpi śarair atāḍayat tasmai gadāṁ so 'pi ruṣā vyamuñcata

TRANSLATION

Then with two arrows Lord Hari struck the trident flying toward Garuḍa and broke it into three pieces. Next the Lord hit Mura's faces with several arrows, and the demon angrily hurled his club at the Lord.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa broke the trident, which was approaching Garuḍa, into three pieces with two arrows. Mura then threw a club at Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.59.10 ||

tām āpatantīṁ gadayā gadāṁ mṛdhe gadāgrajo nirbibhide sahasradhā

udyamya bāhūn abhidhāvato 'jitaḥ śirāṁsi cakreṇa jahāra līlayā

TRANSLATION

As Mura's club sped toward Him on the battlefield, Lord Gadāgraja intercepted it with His own and broke it into thousands of pieces. Mura then raised his arms high and rushed at the unconquerable Lord, who easily sliced off his heads with His disc weapon.

COMMENTARY

Mura raised his arms and ran towards Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.59.11 ||

vyasuḥ papātāmbhasi kṛtta-śīrṣo nikṛtta-śṛṅgo 'drir ivendra-tejasā

tasyātmajāḥ sapta pitur vadhāturāḥ pratikriyāmarṣa-juṣaḥ samudyatāḥ

TRANSLATION

Lifeless, Mura's decapitated body fell into the water like a mountain whose peak has been severed by the power of Lord Indra's thunderbolt. The demon's seven sons, enraged by their father's death, prepared to retaliate.

COMMENTARY

Mura fell like a mountain top cut off by Indra's thunderbolt (*indra tejasā*). Filled with anger to avenge their father's death, Mura's seven sons prepared for battle.

|| 10.59.12 ||

tāmro 'ntarikṣaḥ śravaṇo vibhāvasur vasur nabhasvān aruṇaś ca saptamaḥ

pīṭhaṁ puraskṛtya camū-patiṁ mṛdhe bhauma-prayuktā niragan dhṛtāyudhāḥ

TRANSLATION

Ordered by Bhaumāsura, Mura's seven sons—Tāmra, Antarikṣa, Śravaṇa, Vibhāvasu, Vasu, Nabhasvān and Aruṇa—followed their general, Pīṭha, onto the battlefield bearing their weapons.

COMMENTARY

They came out (*niragan*) of their fortress holding their weapons.

|| 10.59.13 ||

prāyuñjatāsādya śarān asīn gadāḥ śakty-ṛṣṭi-śūlāny ajite ruṣolbaṇāḥ

tac-chastra-kūṭaṁ bhagavān sva-mārgaṇair amogha-vīryas tilaśaś cakarta ha

TRANSLATION

These fierce warriors furiously attacked invincible Lord Kṛṣṇa with arrows, swords, clubs, spears, lances and tridents, but the Supreme Lord, with unfailing prowess, cut this mountain of weapons into tiny pieces with His arrows.

|| 10.59.14 ||

tān pīṭha-mukhyān anayad yama-kṣayaṁ nikṛtta-śīrṣoru-bhujāṅghri-varmaṇaḥ

svānīka-pān acyuta-cakra-sāyakais tathā nirastān narako dharā-sutaḥ

nirīkṣya durmarṣaṇa āsravan-madair gajaiḥ payodhi-prabhavair nirākramāt

TRANSLATION

The Lord severed the heads, thighs, arms, legs and armor of these opponents led by Pīṭha and sent them all to the abode of Yamarāja. Narakāsura, the son of the earth, could not contain his fury when he saw the fate of his military leaders. Thus he went out of the citadel with elephants born from the Milk Ocean who were exuding mada from their foreheads out of excitement.

COMMENTARY

Yama-kṣayaṁ means that Kṛṣṇa sent them all to the abode of Yamarāja (death). The real meaning is that Kṛṣṇa gave them liberation, for *yama* means the *yoga* process starting with *yama* and *niyama* and ending with liberation. Narakāsura came out with elephants that were exuding *mada* [a viscous secretion produced from the foreheads of excited elephants].

|| 10.59.15 ||

dṛṣṭvā sa-bhāryaṁ garuḍopari sthitaṁ sūryopariṣṭāt sa-taḍid ghanaṁ yathā

kṛṣṇaṁ sa tasmai vyasṛjac chata-ghnīṁ yodhāś ca sarve yugapac ca vivyadhuḥ

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa and His wife, mounted upon Garuḍa, looked like a cloud with lightning sitting above the sun. Seeing the Lord, Bhauma released his Śataghnī weapon at Him, whereupon all of Bhauma's soldiers simultaneously attacked with their weapons.

COMMENTARY

Narakāsura threw his Śataghnī (name of his *śakti* spear) weapon at Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.59.16 ||

tad bhauma-sainyaṁ bhagavān gadāgrajo vicitra-vājair niśitaiḥ śilīmukhaiḥ

nikṛtta-bāhūru-śirodhra-vigrahaṁ cakāra tarhy eva hatāśva-kuñjaram

TRANSLATION

At that moment Lord Gadāgraja shot His sharp arrows at Bhaumāsura's army. These arrows, displaying variegated feathers, soon reduced that army to a mass

of bodies with severed arms, thighs and necks. The Lord similarly killed the opposing horses and elephants.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa decimated the enemy troops with colorfully feathered arrows (*vicitra-vājair*).

|| 10.59.17-19 ||

yāni yodhaiḥ prayuktāni śastrāstrāṇi kurūdvaha

haris tāny acchinat tīkṣṇaiḥ śarair ekaikaśas trībhiḥ

uhyamānaḥ suparṇena pakṣābhyāṁ nighnatā gajān

gurutmatā hanyamānās tuṇḍa-pakṣa-nakher gajāḥ

puram evāviśann ārtā narako yudhy ayudhyata

TRANSLATION

Lord Hari then struck down all the missiles and weapons the enemy soldiers threw at Him, O hero of the Kurus, destroying each and every one with three sharp arrows. Meanwhile Garuḍa, as he carried the Lord, struck the enemy's elephants with his wings. Beaten by Garuḍa's wings, beak and talons, the elephants fled back into the city, leaving Narakāsura alone on the battlefield to oppose Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

Having described the cutting off of the enemies' arms, now the cutting to pieces of their swords, hand weapons (*śastrās*), arrows and missiles (*astrāṇi*) is described. One by one Kṛṣṇa shot down each weapon with three arrows. Even before the weapons shot by the warriors reached their target, Kṛṣṇa first killed the throwers of the weapons and then destroyed the missiles while they were still in the air, each with three arrows. Kṛṣṇa's arrows were shot one after the other, not three at once.

Kṛṣṇa shot so rapidly that Śukadeva Gosvāmī cried out in extreme amazement, "*O kuru-udvaha!*" (O hero of the Kurus, King Parīkṣit) By this expression Śukadeva Gosvāmī implies that even among the Kurus, such personalities as Bhīṣma and Arjuna were not capable of knowing such swiftness in using weapons, in spite of the fact that Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself had taught them.

|| 10.59.20 ||

taṁ bhaumaḥ prāharac chaktyā vajraḥ pratihato yataḥ

nākampata tayā viddho mālāhata iva dvipaḥ

TRANSLATION

Seeing his army driven back and tormented by Garuḍa, Bhauma attacked him with his spear, which had once defeated Lord Indra's thunderbolt. But though struck by that mighty weapon, Garuḍa was not shaken. Indeed, he was like an elephant hit with a flower garland.

COMMENTARY

Narakāsura threw his spear, which had previously defeated Indra's thunderbolt, but to Garuḍa it felt like a flower garland.

|| 10.59.21 ||

śūlaṁ bhaumo 'cyutaṁ hantum ādade vitathodyamaḥ

tad-visargāt pūrvam eva narakasya śiro hariḥ

apāharad gaja-sthasya cakreṇa kṣura-neminā

TRANSLATION

Bhauma, frustrated in all his attempts, took up his trident to kill Lord Kṛṣṇa. But even before he could release it, the Lord cut off his head with His razor-sharp cakra as the demon sat atop his elephant.

COMMENTARY

As Bhauma raised his invincible trident, Satyabhāmā, sitting beside Kṛṣṇa on Garuḍa, said, "Kill him right away," and Kṛṣṇa did just that.

|| 10.59.22 ||

sa-kuṇḍalaṁ cāru-kirīṭa-bhūṣaṇaṁ babhau pṛthivyāṁ patitam samujjvalam

ha heti sādhv ity ṛṣayaḥ sureśvarā mālyair mukundaṁ vikiranta īdire

TRANSLATION

Fallen on the ground, Bhaumāsura's head shone brilliantly, decorated as it was with earrings and an attractive helmet. As cries of "Alas, alas!" and "Well done!" arose, the sages and principal demigods worshiped Lord Mukunda by showering Him with flower garlands.

COMMENTARY

The sages and demigods shouted *hā hā iti* ("alas, alas!") which usually indicates sorrow but here it indicates condemnation according to Kṣira Svāmī. They said, "Oh what a sinful person, disturbing the whole world! It is good (*sādhu*) that you have been killed." They covered Kṛṣṇa with garlands.

|| 10.59.23 ||

tataś ca bhūḥ kṛṣṇam upetya kuṇḍale pratapta-jāmbūnada-ratna-bhāsvare

sa-vaijayantyā vana-mālayārpayat prācetasaṁ chatram atho mahā-maṇim

TRANSLATION

The goddess of the earth then approached Lord Kṛṣṇa and presented Him with Aditi's earrings, which were made of glowing gold inlaid with shining jewels. She also gave Him a Vaijayantī flower garland, Varuṇa's umbrella and the peak of Mandara Mountain.

COMMENTARY

Bhūmi returned everything stolen by her son, including the peak of Mandara Mountain (*mahā-maṇim:*Mani-parvata).

|| 10.59.24 ||

astauṣīd atha viśveśaṁ devī deva-varārcitam

prāñjaliḥ praṇatā rājan bhakti-pravaṇayā dhiyā

TRANSLATION

O King, after bowing down to Him and then standing with joined palms, the goddess, her mind filled with devotion, began to praise the Lord of the universe, whom the best of demigods worship.

|| 10.59.25 ||

bhūmir uvāca

namas te deva-deveśa śaṅkha-cakra-gadā-dhara

bhaktecchopātta-rūpāya paramātman namo 'stu te

TRANSLATION

Goddess Bhūmi said: Obeisances unto You, O Lord of the chief demigods, O holder of the conchshell, disc and club. O Supreme Soul within the heart, You assume Your various forms to fulfill Your devotees' desires. Obeisances unto You.

COMMENTARY

Bhūmi addressed Kṛṣṇa as "O Supreme Soul!" (*parama-ātman*) which implies, "You know the sincerity of my heart, even though I am the mother of Your enemy."

|| 10.59.26 ||

namaḥ paṅkaja-nābhāya namaḥ paṅkaja-māline

namaḥ paṅkaja-netrāya namas tepaṅkajāṅghraye

TRANSLATION

My respectful obeisances are unto You, O Lord, whose abdomen is marked with a depression like a lotus flower, who are always decorated with garlands of lotus flowers, whose glance is as cool as the lotus and whose feet are engraved with lotuses.

COMMENTARY

By describing the sweet beauty (*mādhuryam*) of Kṛṣṇa, Bhūmi indicated that just by His *darśana* her senses had attained perfection.

|| 10.59.27 ||

namo bhagavate tubhyaṁ vāsudevāya viṣṇave

puruṣāyādi-bījāya pūrṇa-bodhāya te namaḥ

TRANSLATION

Obeisances unto You, the Supreme Lord Vāsudeva, Viṣṇu, the primeval person, the original seed. Obeisances unto You, the omniscient one.

COMMENTARY

In this verse Bhūmi explains, "I am sporting now in the ocean of Your opulences (*aiśvarya*). I pay respects to You, the omnipotent Supreme Personality of Godhead (*bhagavate*). Even though You are full of all powers and are the original form of Bhagavān, still You appear as the son of Vasudeva (*vāsudevāya*). Though You are the son of Vasudeva, You are Viṣṇu, the all-pervading one. Though You are all-pervading, You still appear as an individual person (*puruṣa*). Though You are an individual, You are the original source of all (*ādi-bīja*), even of Nārāyaṇa, as shown during the *Brahma vimohana līlā*. Though You are the original seed, You are the form of complete consciousness, Brahman itself (*pūrṇa-bodhāya*). In other words, though You are endowed with infinite spiritual qualities, You are also the impersonal Brahman."

|| 10.59.28 ||

ajāya janayitre 'sya brahmaṇe 'nanta-śaktaye

parāvarātman bhūtātman paramātman namo 'stu te

TRANSLATION

Obeisances unto You of unlimited energies, the unborn progenitor of this universe, the Absolute. O Soul of the high and the low, O Soul of the created elements, O all-pervading Supreme Soul, obeisances unto You.

COMMENTARY

Anticipating Kṛṣṇa may say, "But if such is the case, then is there no existence prior to My own coming into being?" Bhūmi replies in this verse.

“Though You are unborn (*ajāya*), You generate the universes. Though You generate the universes, You are the impersonal Brahman. Though You are impersonal and without qualities, You are endowed with a spiritual form and unlimited transcendental qualities and energies (*ananta-śaktaye*).

“Though You have unlimited energies, three are principal: *taṭastha, bahiraṅga* and *antaraṅga*. You are the living entities (*jīvas*) composed of all the elevated and degraded souls (*parāvarātman*). You are the soul of the material creation (*bhūtātman*) and You are the internal witness, *paramātman*.”

|| 10.59.29 ||

tvaṁ vai sisṛkṣur aja utkaṭaṁ prabho tamo nirodhāya bibharṣy asaṁvṛtaḥ

sthānāya sattvaṁ jagato jagat-pate kālaḥ pradhānaṁ puruṣo bhavān paraḥ

TRANSLATION

Desiring to create, O unborn master, You increase and then assume the mode of passion. You do likewise with the mode of ignorance when You wish to annihilate the universe and with goodness when You wish to maintain it. Nonetheless, You remain uncovered by these modes. You are time, the pradhāna, and the puruṣa, O Lord of the universe, yet still You are separate and distinct.

COMMENTARY

Bhūmi said, “According to the time, You carry out creation, mainte-nance and destruction of the universe through Your *māyā-śakti*. You contain the activated *raja, tama* and *sattva gunas*, but You are not covered by them like the conditioned souls. You are time, *māyā* and the living entities (*jīvas*) since they are all Your energies. Nevertheless, by Your internal energy (*svarūpa-śakti*) You are separate and distinct (*paraḥ:anyaḥ*) from these above mentioned entities.”

|| 10.59.30 ||

ahaṁ payo jyotir athānilo nabho mātrāṇi devā mana indriyāṇi

kartā mahān ity akhilaṁ carācaraṁ tvayy advitīye bhagavan ayaṁ bhramaḥ

TRANSLATION

This is illusion: that earth, water, fire, air, ether, sense objects, demigods, mind, the senses, false ego and the total material energy exist independent of You. In fact, they are all within You, my Lord, who are one without a second.

COMMENTARY

"But," Kṛṣṇa may object, "You say that this very body of Mine is composed of the material elements. Thus, since My eyes and other senses are expansions of false ego in the mode of goodness, I am called Brahman mixed with Māyā (*māyā-sabalaṁ brahma*). How then am I distinct from these material elements?"

Bhūmi replies in this verse. "Those people who say that earth and all the other elements, the senses, the sense objects (*mātrāṇi*), mind, false ego (*kartā*:the doer), consciousness (*mahān*), and the moving (mind and senses) and non-moving (dull matter and *prāṇa*) exist in You are mistaken, because in You there is no difference (*advitiye*). Your body and senses are all spiritual. It cannot be that matter is the same as You."

|| 10.59.31 ||

tasyātmajo 'yaṁ tava pāda-paṅkajaṁ bhītaḥ prapannārti-haropasāditaḥ

tat pālayainaṁ kuru hasta-paṅkajaṁ śirasy amuṣyākhila-kalmaṣāpaham

TRANSLATION

Here is the son of Bhaumāsura. Frightened, he is approaching Your lotus feet, since You remove the distress of all who seek refuge in You. Please protect him. Place Your lotus hand, which dispels all sins, upon his head.

COMMENTARY

After praising Kṛṣṇa, Bhūmi made a request: "O remover of the distress of the surrendered! The son of Naraka named Bhagadatta is extremely afraid, so I am approaching Your lotus feet on his behalf."

|| 10.59.32 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

iti bhūmy-arthito vāgbhir bhagavān bhakti-namrayā

dattvābhayaṁ bhauma-gṛham prāviśat sakalarddhimat

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus entreated by Goddess Bhūmi in words of humble devotion, the Supreme Lord bestowed fearlessness upon her grandson and then entered Bhaumāsura's palace, which was filled with all manner of riches.

|| 10.59.33 ||

tatra rājanya-kanyānāṁ ṣaṭ-sahasrādhikāyutam

bhaumāhṛtānāṁ vikramya rājabhyo dadṛśe hariḥ

TRANSLATION

There Lord Kṛṣṇa saw sixteen thousand royal maidens, whom Bhauma had taken by force from various kings.

COMMENTARY

There were actually 16,100 royal maidens imprisoned in Bhauma's palace according to the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (5.29.31):

> *kanyā-pure sa kanyānāṁ ṣoḍaśātulya-vikramaḥ*
>
> *śatādhikāni dadṛśe sahasrāṇi mahā-mate*

Bhauma had stolen 16,100 women not only from kings (*rājabhyaḥ*), but he also kidnapped the unmarried daughters of demigods, sages and demons as well.

|| 10.59.34 ||

tam praviṣṭaṁ striyo vīkṣya nara-varyaṁ vimohitāḥ

manasā vavrire 'bhīṣṭaṁ patiṁ daivopasāditam

TRANSLATION

The women became enchanted when they saw that most excellent of males enter. In their minds they each accepted Him, who had been brought there by destiny, as their chosen husband.

|| 10.59.35 ||

bhūyāt patir ayaṁ mahyaṁ dhātā tad anumodatām

iti sarvāḥ pṛthak kṛṣṇe bhāvena hṛdayaṁ dadhuḥ

TRANSLATION

With the thought "May providence grant that this man become my husband," each and every princess absorbed her heart in contemplation of Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.59.36 ||

tāḥ prāhiṇod dvāravatīṁ su-mṛṣṭa-virajo-'mbarāḥ

nara-yānair mahā-kośān rathāśvān draviṇaṁ mahāt

TRANSLATION

The Lord had the princesses arrayed in clean, spotless garments and then sent them in palanquins to Dvārakā, together with great treasures of chariots, horses and other valuables.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa sent the women to Dvārakā in palanquins (*narayānaiḥ*).

|| 10.59.37 ||

airāvata-kulebhāṁś ca catur-dantāṁs tarasvinaḥ

pāṇḍurāṁś ca catuḥ-ṣaṣṭiṁ prerayām āsa keśavaḥ

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa also dispatched sixty-four swift white elephants, descendants of Airāvata, who each sported four tusks.

|| 10.59.38-39 ||

gatvā surendra-bhavanaṁ dattvādityai ca kuṇḍale

pūjitas tridaśendreṇa mahendryāṇyā ca sa-priyaḥ

codito bhāryayotpāṭya pārījātaṁ garutmati

āropya sendrān vibudhān nirjityopānayat puram

TRANSLATION

The Lord then went to the abode of Indra, the demigods' king, and gave mother Aditi her earrings; there Indra and his wife worshiped Kṛṣṇa and His beloved consort Satyabhāmā. Then, at Satyabhāmā's behest the Lord uprooted the heavenly pārijāta tree and put it on the back of Garuḍa. After defeating Indra and all the other demigods, Kṛṣṇa brought the pārijāta to His capital.

COMMENTARY

Instigated (*coditaḥ) by Satyabhāmā,* Kṛṣṇa took the *pārijāta* tree.

|| 10.59.40 ||

sthāpitaḥ satyabhāmāyā gṛhodyānopaśobhanaḥ

anvagur bhramarāḥ svargāt tad-gandhāsava-lampaṭāḥ

TRANSLATION

Once planted, the pārijāta tree beautified the garden of Queen Satyabhāmā's palace. Bees followed the tree all the way from heaven, greedy for its fragrance and sweet sap.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa planted the tree in Satyabhāmā's private garden.

|| 10.59.41 ||

yayāca ānamya kirīṭa-koṭibhiḥ pādau spṛśann acyutam artha-sādhanam

siddhārtha etena vigṛhyate mahān aho surāṇāṁ ca tamo dhig āḍhyatām

TRANSLATION

Even after Indra had bowed down to Lord Acyuta, touched His feet with the tips of his crown and begged the Lord to fulfill his desire, that exalted demigod, having achieved his purpose, chose to fight with the Supreme Lord. What ignorance there is among the gods! To hell with their opulence!

COMMENTARY

Parīkṣit was astonished to hear that Indra fought with his worshipful Lord Kṛṣṇa. Śukadeva therefore condemned Indra's character in this verse: "Although Kṛṣṇa fulfilled Indra's desire (*artha sādhanam*) to kill Narakāsura and bring back Aditi's earrings, still Indra fought with Kṛṣṇa, even though he is the king of the demigods. What anger the demigods have! One who is really situated in *sattva-guṇa* would never do such a thing. Furthermore, Indra is not just any demigod, but the king of the demigods and even he is manifested the mode of ignorance. Therefore to hell with their wealth! What *anartha* does wealth not create?"

|| 10.59.42 ||

atho muhūrta ekasmin nānāgāreṣu tāḥ striyaḥ

yathopayeme bhagavān tāvad-rūpa-dharo 'vyayaḥ

TRANSLATION

Then the imperishable Supreme Personality, assuming a separate form for each bride, duly married all the princesses simultaneously, each in her own palace.

COMMENTARY

Returning to Dvārakā, Kṛṣṇa married all the women at the same time (*muhūrta ekasmin*) because the experts in astrology told Kṛṣṇa that the most auspicious time (*lagna*) for marriage was at that very moment. Kṛṣṇa manifested identical forms (*prakāśa-vigrahas:tāvad-rūpa-dharo*) of Himself to marry all the brides. Though Kṛṣṇa had one body, it appeared in separate forms and He controlled all of them. One should not explain the phrase *tāvad-rūpa-dharo* as simply a multiplication of bodies (*kāya-vyūha*). This is corroborated by Nārada Muni in a later chapter:

citraṁ bataitad ekena, vapuṣā yugapat pṛthak

gṛheṣu dvy-aṣṭa-sāhasraṁ, striya eka udāvahat

> Nārada Muni thought, “It is quite amazing that in a single body Lord Kṛṣṇa simultaneously married sixteen thousand women, each in a separate palace.” (SB 10.61.2)

According to Śrīdhara Svāmī, the phrase *yathopayeme*, “married properly” implies that Kṛṣṇa’s entire company of relatives, including Devakī and others, also appeared in each and every house simultaneously. By Kṛṣṇa’s inconceivable energy all of His associates also manifested identical forms. The word *āvyayaḥ* (imperishable) means in all circumstances they were complete, not present only in a partial expansion. The *Brhad-bhāgavatamrta* confirms this point: “The *prakāśa* forms of Kṛṣṇa are not different at all from the original form of Kṛṣṇa.”

|| 10.59.43 ||

gṛheṣu tāsām anapāyy atarka-kṛn nirasta-sāmyātiśayeṣv avasthitaḥ

reme ramābhir nija-kāma-sampluto yathetaro gārhaka-medhikāṁś caran

TRANSLATION

The Lord, performer of the inconceivable, constantly remained in each of His queens’ palaces, which were unequaled and unexcelled by any other residence. There, although fully satisfied within Himself, He enjoyed with His pleasing wives, and like an ordinary husband He carried out His household duties.

COMMENTARY

Performing inconceivable activities (*atarka kṛt*), Kṛṣṇa was situated in each house of every wife so that each thought; “Kṛṣṇa is associating only with me, and all the other Queens are suffering separation from Him.” Their houses had no equal or superior, even in Vaikuṇṭha. What then to speak of the enjoyment there?

The phrase *nija-kāma-sampluto* means, “Immersed in the lust (*kāma:kandarpeṇa*) which is innate in His own internal nature (*nija:svarūpa-bhūtena*),” Kṛṣṇa enjoyed with thousands of the most pleasing goddesses of fortune (*ramābhiḥ*). This implies that since in Vaikuṇṭha His plenary expansion Nārāyaṇa enjoys with only one goddess of fortune, Dvārakā is far superior to Vaikuṇṭha. In Dvārakā, Kṛṣṇa carried out His household duties (*gārhaka-medhikāṁś*) with the addition of sweetness. In this regard, the Prabhāsa-khaṇḍa of the *Skanda Purāṇa* says:

ṣoḍaśaiva sahasrāṇi gopyas tawra samāgatāḥ

haṁsa eva mataḥ kṛṣṇaḥ paramātmā janārdanaḥ

tasyaitāḥ śaktayo devi ṣoḍaśaiva prakīṛtitāḥ

candra-rūpī mataḥ kṛṣṇaḥ kalā-rūpās tu tāḥ smṛtāḥ

sampūrṇa-maṇḍalā tāsāṁ mālinī ṣoḍaśī kalā

ṣoḍaśaiva kalā yāsu gopī-rūpā varāṅgane

ekaikaśas tāḥ sambhinnāḥ sahasreṇa pṛthak pṛthak

"At that place sixteen thousand gopīs were assembled with Kṛṣṇa, who is considered the Supreme, the Supersoul, the shelter of all living beings. These gopīs are His renowned sixteen potencies, O goddess. Kṛṣṇa is like the moon, the gopīs are like its phases, and the full contingent of gopīs is like the full sequence of the moons sixteen phases. Each of these sixteen divisions of gopīs, my dear Varāṅganā, is subdivided into one thousand parts."

Furthermore, the *Kārttika-māhātmya* section of the *Padma Purāṇa* says: *kaiśore gopa-kanyās tā yauvane rāja-kanyakāḥ*, "Those who were the daughters of cowherds in their early youth became royal princesses in their maturity." In other words, Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana is the most perfect and complete form of Godhead, and His plenary expansions (*prakāśa-vigrahas*) in Dvārakā are perfect. Similarly, the Vrajagopīs are the supremely complete forms of Kṛṣṇa's pleasure potency (*hlādinī-śakti*) and their *prakāśa* forms, the Queens in Dvārakā, are perfect.

|| 10.59.44 ||

itthaṁ ramā-patim avāpya patiṁ striyas tā

brahmādayo 'pi na viduḥ padavīṁ yadīyām

bhejur mudāviratam edhitayānurāga

hāsāvaloka-nava-saṅgama-jalpa-lajjāḥ

TRANSLATION

Thus those women obtained as their husband the husband of the goddess of fortune, although even great demigods like Brahmā do not know how to approach Him. With ever-increasing pleasure they experienced loving attraction for Him, exchanged smiling glances with Him and reciprocated with Him in ever-fresh intimacy, replete with joking and feminine shyness.

COMMENTARY

Brahmā and other demigods do not know the method of attaining Kṛṣṇa, who is the husband of those perfect Lakṣmīs, the Dvārakā *mahiṣīs*. What chance is there for anyone else to directly know Kṛṣṇa; and what to speak of actually attaining Him? With continuously increasing joy the Queens of Dvārakā experienced Kṛṣṇa's smiling love-filled glances, intimate bodily contact and playful love talks. Kṛṣṇa's Queens exhibited their natural feminine shyness whenever He responded in kind to their sweet mutterings.

|| 10.59.45 ||

pratyudgamāsana-varārhaṇa-pada-śauca-

tāmbūla-viśramaṇa-vījana-gandha-mālyaiḥ keśa-prasāra-śayana-snapanopahāryaiḥ dāsī-śatā api vibhor vidadhuḥ sma dāsyam

TRANSLATION

Although the Supreme Lord's queens each had hundreds of maidservants, they chose to personally serve the Lord by approaching Him humbly, offering Him a seat, worshiping Him with excellent paraphernalia, bathing and massaging His feet, giving Him pān to chew, fanning Him, anointing Him with fragrant sandalwood paste, adorning Him with flower garlands, dressing His hair, arranging His bed, bathing Him, and presenting Him with various gifts.

Thus ends the commentary on the Fifty Ninth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Sixty

Kṛṣṇa Teases Rukmiṇī

|| 10.60.1 ||

śrī-bādarāyaṇir uvāca

karhicit sukham āsīnaṁ sva-talpa-sthaṁ jagad-gurum

patiṁ paryacarad bhaiṣmī vyajanena sakhī-janaiḥ

TRANSLATION

Śrī Bādarāyaṇi said: Once, in the company of her maidservants, Queen Rukmiṇī was personally serving her husband, the spiritual master of the universe, by fanning Him as He relaxed on her bed.

COMMENTARY

In this chapter Kṛṣṇa grinds the fragrant camphor-like heart of Rukmiṇī with the pestle of His words. In other words, the lovely, chaste qualities of Rukmiṇī will become manifest as a result of Kṛṣṇa's apparently insensitive words, just as camphor's fragrance becomes manifest when crushed on a grinding stone. Rukmiṇī is personally serving Kṛṣṇa for two reasons: Kṛṣṇa is her husband (*patiṁ*), and He is the spiritual master of the universe (*jagad-gurum*).

|| 10.60.2 ||

yas tv etal līlayā viśvaṁ sṛjaty atty avatīśvaraḥ

sa hi jātaḥ sva-setūnāṁ gopīthāya yaduṣv ajaḥ

TRANSLATION

The unborn Personality of Godhead, the supreme controller, who creates, maintains and then devours this universe simply as His play, took birth among the Yadus to preserve His own laws.

COMMENTARY

To prove that Kṛṣṇa's disturbing Rukmiṇī's mood of loving service, which is about to be described, was His pastime (*līlayā*) and nothing else, this verse states that the creation and destruction of the world is also Kṛṣṇa's *līlā*. Though Kṛṣṇa is unborn, He appeared in the Yadu dynasty in order to protect (*gopīthāya pālanāya*) and maintain the principles of religion. This implies that it can never be Kṛṣṇa's desire to stop the *prema-seva* of His beloved devotee, but rather He acts in such a way to strengthen that *prema*.

|| 10.60.3-6 ||

tasmin antar-gṛhe bhrājan- muktā-dāma-vilambinā

virājite vitānena dīpair maṇi-mayair api

mallikā-dāmabhiḥ puṣpair dvirepha-kula-nādite

jāla-randhra-praviṣṭaiś ca gobhiś candramaso 'malaiḥ

pārijāta-vanāmoda- vāyunodyāna-śālinā

dhūpair aguru-jai rājan jāla-randhra-vinirgataiḥ

payaḥ-phena-nibhe śubhre paryaṅke kaśipūttame

upatasthe sukhāsīnaṁ jagatām īśvaraṁ patim

TRANSLATION

Queen Rukmiṇī's quarters were extremely beautiful, boasting a canopy hung with brilliant strings of pearls, as well as effulgent jewels serving as lamps. Garlands of jasmine and other flowers hung here and there, attracting swarms of humming bees, and the spotless rays of the moon shone through the holes of

the lattice windows. As aguru incense drifted out of the window holes, my dear King, the breeze wafting the scent of the pārijāta grove carried the mood of a garden into the room. There the Queen served her husband, the Supreme Lord of all the worlds, as He reclined upon an opulent pillow on her bed, which was as soft and white as the foam of milk.

COMMENTARY

The palace is described in order to show that everything was perfectly arranged by Rukmiṇī to please Kṛṣṇa with her loving service. The room was splendid with shining jewels and a canopy adorned with hanging clusters of dazzling pearls. The word *amalaiḥ* in this verse may also be read *aruṇaiḥ*, which indicates that when this pastime took place the ruddy rays of the rising moon were entering through the holes of the lattice windows, and clouds of *aguru* incense were streaming out of the windows. There Rukmiṇī attentively served Kṛṣṇa, who was lying on the best of beds (*kaśipūttame*).

|| 10.60.7 ||

vāla-vyajanam ādāya ratna-daṇḍaṁ sakhī-karāt

tena vījayatī devī upāsāṁ cakra īśvaram

TRANSLATION

From her maidservant's hand Goddess Rukmiṇī took a yak-hair fan with a jeweled handle, and then she began to worship her master by fanning Him.

|| 10.60.8 ||

sopācyutaṁ kvaṇayatī maṇi-nūpurābhyāṁ

reje 'ṅgulīya-valaya-vyajanāgra-hastā

vastrānta-gūḍha-kuca-kuṅkuma-śoṇa-hāra-

bhāsā nitamba-dhṛtayā ca parārdhya-kāñcyā

TRANSLATION

Her hand adorned with rings, bangles and the cāmara fan, Queen Rukmiṇī looked resplendent standing near Lord Kṛṣṇa. Her jeweled ankle-bells tinkled,

and her necklace glittered, reddened by the kuṅkuma from her breasts, which were covered by the end of her sāri. On her hips she wore a priceless belt.

COMMENTARY

Rukmiṇī appeared most attractive with her jeweled anklebells as she stood next to Kṛṣṇa (*upa-acyutam*). She held a *cāmara* whisk in her hand which was adorned with golden rings and bracelets. As she fanned Kṛṣṇa with broad strokes, her jeweled bangles, waistbells and anklebells tinkled sweetly. Rukmiṇī looked extremely beautiful with her necklace glittering red from the *kuṅkuma* on her breasts, which were covered by the end of her *sāri*. She wore a priceless belt around her hips.

|| 10.60.9 ||

tāṁ rūpiṇīṁ śrīyam ananya-gatiṁ nirīkṣya

yā līlayā dhṛta-tanor anurūpa-rūpā

prītaḥ smayann alaka-kuṇḍala-niṣka-kaṇṭha-

vaktrollasat-smita-sudhāṁ harir ābabhāṣe

TRANSLATION

As He contemplated her, the goddess of fortune herself, who desires only Him, Lord Kṛṣṇa smiled. The Lord assumes various forms to enact His pastimes, and He was pleased that the form the goddess of fortune had assumed was just suitable for her to serve as His consort. Her charming face was adorned with curling hair, earrings, a locket on her neck, and the nectar of her bright, happy smile. The Lord then spoke to Her as follows.

COMMENTARY

Seeing Rukmiṇī, who was much more beautiful than even Lakṣmī in Vaikuṇṭha, Kṛṣṇa spoke. The reason is given here that for pastimes Rukmiṇī had assumed a form corresponding to the form of Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Parāśara said in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa:

devatve deva-deheyaṁ manuṣyatve ca mānuṣī

viṣṇor dehānurūpāṁ vai karoty eṣātmanas tanum

> “When Viṣṇu appears as a demigod, Lakṣmī takes the form of a demigoddess, and when He appears as a human being, she takes a humanlike form. Thus She assumes a form suitable to the form that the Lord assumes.”

As Kṛṣṇa is more beautiful than the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha, so Rukmiṇī is more beautiful than Lakṣmī. The word *smayan* (smiled) implies that Kṛṣṇa smiled slightly while thinking, “It is proper that Rukmiṇī has assumed a form appropriate to My form. Now I will joke with her and hear what she says.” The four directions were beautified by Rukmiṇī’s charming smiling face, which was decorated with curling locks of hair, earrings and a locket on her neck.

|| 10.60.10 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

rāja-putrīpsitā bhūpair loka-pāla-vibhūtibhiḥ

mahānubhāvaiḥ śrīmadbhī rūpaudārya-balorjitaiḥ

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord said: My dear princess, you were sought after by many kings as powerful as the rulers of planets. They were all abundantly endowed with political influence, wealth, beauty, generosity and physical strength.

|| 10.60.11 ||

tān prāptān arthino hitvā caidyādīn smara-durmadān

dattā bhrātrā sva-pitrā ca kasmān no vavṛṣe ’samān

TRANSLATION

Since your brother and father offered you to them, why did you reject the King of Cedi and all those other suitors, who stood before you, maddened by Cupid? Why, instead, did you choose Us, who are not at all your equal?

|| 10.60.12 ||

rājabhyo bibhyataḥ su-bhru samudraṁ śaraṇaṁ gatān

balavadbhiḥ kṛta-dveṣān prāyas tyakta-nṛpāsanān

TRANSLATION

Terrified of these kings, O lovely-browed one, We took shelter in the ocean. We have become enemies of powerful men, and We practically abandoned Our royal throne.

COMMENTARY

By seeing Kṛṣṇa's statements later on, His mentality here can be understood as follows: "When I gave Rukmiṇī one flower from the heavenly *pārijāta* tree, Satyabhāmā became so full of anger and pride, that I could not pacify her even by falling at her feet. Only when I gave her a whole *pārijāta* tree was she satisfied. Rukmiṇī, however, did not show any anger even when she saw Me give Satyabhāmā a whole tree. So how will I be able to taste the sweetness of Rukmiṇī's anger, when anger is not possible in her, because she is always sober and speaks sweet words?"

Thus considering, Kṛṣṇa decided, "If I speak like this to Rukmiṇī, I will be able to provoke her anger." This is how some authorities explain Kṛṣṇa's speech to Rukmiṇī. Others explain that Kṛṣṇa spoke as He did to see how His beloved Rukmiṇī would respond if He tried to uproot the tree of her *prema*. Thus Kṛṣṇa said, "My dear beloved, you think that you are very intelligent. Despite your being completely endowed without all transcendental qualities, actually you are ignorant of your own welfare. Therefore you are not intelligent. Now just listen as I explain this."

Kṛṣṇa then speaks eleven verses (10-21). "O princess (verse 11), you are the daughter of a king and I am the penniless son of Vāsudeva. Why did you choose Me as your husband? You cannot say that you accepted Me because there was no alternative, for many kings wanted you as their wife. Nor can you say that those kings were inferior in wealth, beauty and qualities to Me, for they were endowed with fabulous wealth, power, beauty and courage like the *lokapālas*, planetary rulers. They were not devoid of wealth and enjoyment like Rantideva and others. You cannot say that they were far away (*prāptān:*nearby, verse 11) because they came to your place to request you. Nor can you say that your relatives were opposed, for your brother and father wanted to give you to them. You also failed to notice my cowardly nature, a great fault in one born as a *kṣatriya*. I fled from the kings out of fear and now live in the ocean. You cannot say that though I showed fear, I have proper conduct, for I made enemies with many strong kings, and have only a few friends like Arjuna. Moreover, being a Yādava, it was not proper for Me to be a king. Although I was entitled to the throne after killing Kaṁsa, I

abandoned that status (*tyakta-nṛpāsanān*) and gave the royal throne to My grandfather Ugrasena.”

|| 10.60.13 ||

aspaṣṭa-vartmanām puṁsām aloka-patham īyuṣām

āsthitāḥ padavīṁ su-bhru prāyaḥ sīdanti yoṣitaḥ

TRANSLATION

O fine-browed lady, women are usually destined to suffer when they stay with men whose behavior is uncertain and who pursue a path not approved by society.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “Pious women who follow the path of men like us, whose course of action is unclear (*aspaṣta-vartmanām*); who are not strictly religious or irreligious; who sometimes steal others’ wives; who at other times follow the rules of Vedic conduct; and who do not follow even common social behavior, since I insulted your brother even in your presence, must almost always (*prāyaḥ*) suffer. If some do not suffer, that is to their credit.”

|| 10.60.14 ||

niṣkiñcanā vayaṁ śaśvan niṣkiñcana-jana-priyāḥ

tasmā tprāyeṇa na hy āḍhyā māṁ bhajanti su-madhyame

TRANSLATION

We have no material possessions, and We are dear to those who similarly have nothing. Therefore, O slender one, the wealthy hardly ever worship Me.

COMMENTARY

By using the word *niṣkiñcanāḥ* (having no possessions) Kṛṣṇa is saying, “I have no interest at all in material sense gratification.”

|| 10.60.15 ||

yayor ātma-samaṁ vittaṁ janmaiśvaryākṛtir bhavaḥ

tayor vivāho maitrī ca nottamādhamayoḥ kvacit

TRANSLATION

Marriage and friendship are proper between two people who are equal in terms of their wealth, birth, influence, physical appearance and capacity for good progeny, but never between a superior and an inferior.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “Furthermore, according to *Nīti-śāstra* it is not proper that you are My wife. Since your father and grandfather are very wealthy, you have abundant personal wealth, whereas my father Vasudeva has no wealth. The only wealth I have is what little I have been able to earn on My own. You hail from a great dynasty, whereas I do not have a good family background, being a Yādava. You have jurisdiction over many towns such as Kuṇḍina in the Vidarbha state, whereas I have only Dvārakā in the Ānarta state. You are fair complexioned and I am black. Your prosperity (*bhava*) is assured, whereas Mine is uncertain because I have many enemies. Those who are equal in wealth, birth, beauty, power and prosperity should marry and not those who are unequal in these matters.”

|| 10.60.16 ||

vaidarbhy etad avijñāya tvayādīrgha-samīkṣayā

vṛtā vayaṁ guṇair hīnā bhikṣubhiḥ ślāghitā mudhā

TRANSLATION

O Vaidarbhī, not being farsighted, you didn’t realize this, and therefore you chose Us as your husband, even though We have no good qualities and are glorified only by deluded beggars.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “You have accepted Me as your husband because you are short sighted (*ādīrgha-samīkṣayā*) and have not considered the overall picture.”

|| 10.60.17 ||

athātmano ’nurūpaṁ vai bhajasva kṣatriyarṣabham

yena tvam āśiṣaḥ satyā ihāmutra ca lapsyase

TRANSLATION

Now you should definitely accept a more suitable husband, a first-class man of the royal order who can help you achieve everything you want, both in this life and the next.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “Moreover, whatever has happened has happened. But since you are still in the prime of youth, there is no loss for you even now. Indeed now (*atha*) you should use your intelligence and choose a suitable *kṣatriya* husband.”

|| 10.60.18 ||

caidya-śālva-jarāsandha dantavakrādayo nṛpāḥ

mama dviṣanti vāmoru rukmī cāpi tavāgrajaḥ

TRANSLATION

Kings like Śiśupāla, Śālva, Jarāsandha and Dantavakra all hate Me, O beautiful-thighed one, and so does your elder brother Rukmī.

COMMENTARY

Rukmiṇī may ask, “Then why did You take me as Your wife?” Kṛṣṇa therefore says, “I took you because Śiśupāla, Śālva, Jarāsanda, Dantavakra and your brother Rukmī were My enemies.”

|| 10.60.19 ||

teṣāṁ vīrya-madāndhānāṁ dṛptānāṁ smaya-nuttaye

ānitāsi mayā bhadre tejopaharatāsatām

TRANSLATION

It was to dispel the arrogance of these kings that I carried you away, My good woman, for they were blinded by the intoxication of power. My purpose was to curb the strength of the wicked.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, "I kidnapped you just to dispel the ignorance (*smaya-nuttaye*) of those conceited kings who were intoxicated with their power."

|| 10.60.20 ||

udāsīnā vayaṁ nūnaṁ na stry-apatyārtha-kāmukāḥ

ātma-labdhyāsmahe pūrṇā gehayor jyotir-akriyāḥ

TRANSLATION

We care nothing for wives, children and wealth. Always satisfied within Ourselves, We do not work for body and home, but like a light, We merely witness.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, "You shouldn't worry that I will be unhappy if You accept another man as your husband. I am indifferent to both the body and home (*gehayoḥ*). Therefore I remain just as witness without action, like a flaming lamp (*jyotir-akriyāḥ*)."

|| 10.60.21 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

etāvad uktvā bhagavān ātmānaṁ vallabhām iva

manyamānām aviśleṣāt tad-darpa-ghna upāramat

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Rukmiṇī had thought herself especially beloved by the Lord because He never left her company. By saying these things to her He vanquished her pride, and then He stopped speaking.

COMMENTARY

By speaking like this Kṛṣṇa broke Rukmiṇī's pride of thinking herself as Kṛṣṇa's dear most Queen due to her intense love (*param-ānurāga*). Because Kṛṣṇa was constantly with her, Rukmiṇī thought, "Even though I am unfit to be Kṛṣṇa's wife, by His own good qualities He made me His most fortunate wife. Thus I have acquired such a husband, who is an ocean of good qualities."

Though the word *vallabha* (beloved) would normally be masculine to agree with *ātmānaṁ*, here it remains feminine to express that Rukmiṇī was thinking herself as Kṛṣṇa's most beloved wife. *Vaiṣṇava-ṭoṣanī* states that Kṛṣṇa destroyed Rukmiṇī's pride by His joking words spoken later in verses 28-29.

|| 10.60.22 ||

iti trilokeśa-pates tadātmanaḥ priyasya devy aśruta-pūrvam apriyam

āśrutya bhītā hṛdi jāta-vepathuś cintāṁ durantāṁ rudatī jagāma ha

TRANSLATION

Goddess Rukmiṇī had never before heard such unpleasantries from her beloved, the Lord of universal rulers, and she became frightened. A tremor arose in her heart, and in terrible anxiety she began to cry.

|| 10.60.23 ||

padā su-jātena nakhāruṇa-śrīyā bhuvaṁ likhanty aśrubhir añjanāsitaiḥ

āsiñcatī kuṅkuma-rūṣitau stanau tasthāv adho-mukhy ati-duḥkha-ruddha-vāk

TRANSLATION

With her tender foot, effulgent with the reddish glow of her nails, she scratched the ground, and tears darkened by her eye makeup sprinkled her kuṅkuma-reddened breasts. There she stood, face downward, her voice choked up by extreme sorrow.

COMMENTARY

This verse describes the symptoms of Rukmiṇī's anxiety. She scratched the ground with her extremely tender (*su-jātena:su-komalena*) foot, which shone with the reddish glow of her nails.

|| 10.60.24 ||

tasyāḥ su-duḥkha-bhaya-śoka-vinaṣṭa-buddher

hastāc chlathad-valayato vyajanaṁ papāta

dehaś ca viklava-dhiyaḥ sahasaiva muhyan

rambheva vāyu-vihato pravikīrya keśān

TRANSLATION

Rukmiṇī's mind was overwhelmed with unhappiness, fear and grief. Her bangles slipped from her hand, and her fan fell to the ground. In her bewilderment she suddenly fainted, her hair scattering all about as her body fell to the ground like a plantain tree blown over by the wind.

COMMENTARY

Rukmiṇī became very unhappy (*su-duḥkha*) from hearing these unpleasant words. She became fearful (*bhaya*) that Kṛṣṇa might leave her. Due to this fear and sadness, Rukmiṇī then became remorseful (*śoka*). Her intelligence thus destroyed (*vinaṣṭa-buddher*) Rukmiṇī could not understand that Kṛṣṇa was only joking.

Her bracelets slipped off her hands (*hastāc chlathad-valayato*) because her body became thin due to the pain of impending separation. Then she lost consciousness (*viklava-dhiyaḥ*), fainted (*muhyan*) and fell on the floor. Thus Rukmiṇī attained the ninth state of *bhāva*, ecstatic love. In this pastime Rukmiṇī experienced the *sāttvika-bhāvas* (devotional ecstasies) ranging from "becoming stunned" (*stambha*) to "dissolution" or fainting (*pralaya*).

|| 10.60.25 ||

tad dṛṣṭvā bhagavān kṛṣṇaḥ priyāyāḥ prema-bandhanam

hāsya-prauḍhim ajānantyāḥ karuṇaḥ so 'nvakampata

TRANSLATION

Seeing that His beloved was so bound to Him in love that she could not understand the full meaning of His teasing, merciful Lord Kṛṣṇa felt compassion for her.

COMMENTARY

Due to ignorance the materialist is bound in the cycle of birth and death. Similarly, Rukmiṇī could not understand the depth of Kṛṣṇa's joking because she was bound by pure love of God (*prema-bandha-nam*). As *kṛṣṇa-prema* increases to *anurāga* (intense attraction), the devotee, who is the shelter of that *anurāga*, feels more and more humble and wretched at every moment. Overwhelmed by delusion, he thinks, "I am not worthy of Kṛṣṇa, and therefore I deserve to be rejected by Him."

|| 10.60.26 ||

paryaṅkād avaruhyāśu tām utthāpya catur-bhujaḥ

keśān samuhya tad-vaktraṁ prāmṛjat padma-pāṇinā

TRANSLATION

The Lord quickly got down from the bed. Manifesting four arms, He picked her up, gathered her hair and caressed her face with His lotus hand.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa manifested four hands to simultaneously lift Rukmiṇī, embrace her, wipe her face and retie her hair.

|| 10.60.27-28 ||

pramṛjyāśru-kale netre stanau copahatau śucā

āśliṣya bāhunā rājan ananya-viṣayāṁ satīm

sāntvayām āsa sāntva-jñaḥ kṛpayā kṛpaṇāṁ prabhuḥ

hāsya-prauḍhi-bhramac-cittām atad-arhāṁ satāṁ gatiḥ

TRANSLATION

Wiping her tear-filled eyes and her breasts, which were stained by tears of grief, the Supreme Lord, the goal of His devotees, embraced His chaste wife, who desired nothing but Him, O King. Expert in the art of pacification, Śrī Kṛṣṇa tenderly consoled pitiable Rukmiṇī, whose mind was bewildered by His clever joking and who did not deserve to suffer so.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa wiped Rukmiṇī's tear-filled eyes (*aśru-kale*) and her breasts, which were stained with tears of sorrow (*śucā*).

|| 10.60.29 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

mā mā vaidarbhy asūyethā jāne tvāṁ mat-parāyaṇām

tvad-vacaḥ śrotu-kāmena kṣvelyācaritam aṅgane

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord said: O Vaidarbhī, do not be displeased with Me. I know that you are fully devoted to Me. I only spoke in jest, dear lady, because I wanted to hear what you would say.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, "If you give up your body how will I be able to bear such a great burden? I will then have to give up My body too."

"Having already created problems for me while making such false displays of love by embracing me and wiping away my tears, do You now want to cause me further suffering?"

Fearing such a response from Rukmiṇī, Kṛṣṇa spoke this verse: "O Vaidarbhī, do not be displeased with Me."

Rukmiṇī might have replied, “O, I am not displeased with You, who are the most merciful. But upon hearing You say that I should go to another man for my own benefit, after having suffered sorrow by staying beside You, I fainted in bliss. Why did You wake me from that swoon? If I had remained in that state a moment longer both You and I could have attained the supreme *nirvāna.*”

Fearing such sarcastic words from Rukmiṇī, Kṛṣṇa then said, “I know that You are fully dedicated to Me, having no other goal than Me.”

Rukmiṇī: “Then why did You speak such cruel words?”

Kṛṣṇa: “Desiring to hear some crooked words from you, O beautiful one, I spoke some joking, untrue words.”

|| 10.60.30 ||

mukhaṁ ca prema-saṁrambha- sphuritādharam īkṣitum

kaṭā-kṣepāruṇāpāṅgaṁ sundara-bhru-kuṭī-taṭam

TRANSLATION

I also wanted to see your face with lips trembling in loving anger, the reddish corners of your eyes throwing sidelong glances and the line of your beautiful eyebrows knit in a frown.

COMMENTARY

In this verse Kṛṣṇa gives other reasons for joking with Rukmiṇī. Kṛṣṇa said, “I wanted to see your face with lips trembling (*sphurita:kampita*) in loving anger (*prema samrambha:praṇaya-kopena*),your eyebrows furrowed, and your reddish eyes throwing angry side-long (*kaṭā:kaṭākṣa*) glances.”

If that was Kṛṣṇa’s desire then why did Rukmiṇī not comply and show anger? Kṛṣṇa’s *icchā-śakti* (desire potency) is under His control, but *prema* controls Kṛṣṇa. Consequently next to *prema*, His *icchā-śakti* has no power. In order to increase Kṛṣṇa’s ecstasy, *prema* sometimes goes against the desire of the Lord. That is the situation here.

In the *sthāyi-bhāva* (permanent loving mellow) of *madhura-rasa* (conjugal love) Rukmiṇī and Kṛṣṇa's other consorts display seven types of love: *prema* (pure love), *sneha* (affection), *māna* (jealous anger), *praṇaya* (attachment), *rāga* (passion), *anurāga* (intense attachment), and *bhāva* (ecstatic love). At the proper moment one of these seven *sthāyi-bhāvas* will manifest and become prominent. Thus, when Rukmiṇī was fanning Kṛṣṇa the *sthāyi-bhāva* of *anurāga* had arisen, and because it was predominated by the *sañcāri-bhāva* of "humility" (*dainyam*) she experienced remorse, anxiety and bewilderment. However, she did not experience affectionate anger or the casting of sidelong glances at Kṛṣṇa. These symptoms would arise later when the *sthāyi-bhāva* of *māna* (jealousy) would appear. Because Rukmiṇī's affection is *ghṛta-sneha* (ghee-like affection) her *māna* does not manifest in the extreme. Satyabhāmā however, with her *madhu-sneha* (honey-like affection) exhibits *māna* even in *anurāga*, and gives Kṛṣṇa immense pleasure with her trembling lips, angry glances and furrowed brows.

|| 10.60.31 ||

ayaṁ hi paramo lābho gṛheṣu gṛha-medhinām

yan narmair īyate yāmaḥ priyayā bhīru bhāmini

TRANSLATION

The greatest pleasure worldly householders can enjoy at home is to spend time joking with their beloved wives, My dear timid and temperamental one.

COMMENTARY

Rukmiṇī might object, "You become unhappy with my services such as fanning, but derive pleasure when I give up those services and speak angry words to You. You are not pleased to see my smiling face, but are pleased to see my face dried up in extreme misery, discolored by anger and displaying horrible grimaces. Why do You act like this?" Kṛṣṇa answers with this verse. "Householders derive the greatest pleasure from joking like this with their beloved wives."

|| 10.60.32 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

saivaṁ bhagavatā rājan vaidarbhī parisāntvitā

jñātvā tat-parihāsoktiṁ priya-tyāga-bhayaṁ jahau

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O King, Queen Vaidarbhī was fully pacified by the Supreme Personality of Godhead and understood that His words had been spoken in jest. Thus she gave up her fear that her beloved would reject her.

|| 10.60.33 ||

babhāṣa ṛṣabhaṁ puṁsāṁ vīkṣantī bhagavan-mukham

sa-vrīḍa-hāsa-rucira- snigdhāpāṅgena bhārata

TRANSLATION

Smiling bashfully as she cast charming, affectionate glances upon the face of the Lord, the best of males, Rukmiṇī spoke the following, O descendant of Bharata.

|| 10.60.34 ||

śrī-rukmiṇy uvāca

nanv evam etad aravinda-vilocanāha

yad vai bhavān bhagavato 'sadṛśī vibhūmnaḥ

kva sve mahimny abhirato bhagavāṁs try-adhīśaḥ

kvāhaṁ guṇa-prakṛtir ajña-gṛhīta-pādā

TRANSLATION

Śrī Rukmiṇī said: Actually, what You have said is true, O lotus-eyed one. I am indeed unsuitable for the almighty Personality of Godhead. What comparison is there between that Supreme Lord, who is master of the three primal deities and who delights in His own glory, and myself, a woman of mundane qualities whose feet are grasped by fools?

COMMENTARY

Taking the same statements by which Kṛṣṇa previously denigrated Himself and praised her, Rukmiṇī now praises Kṛṣṇa by giving an opposite meaning to those arguments.

First Rukmiṇī responds to Kṛṣṇa's statement in Text 11 of this chapter: *kasmān no vavṛṣe 'samān*, "Why did you select Us, who are not equal to you?"

Rukmiṇī said, "Oh lotus-eyed Lord! It is true that I can never be equal to You. You are the Supreme Lord endowed with six opulences, and You are the controller of the three supreme deities (*tryadhīśa*). Whereas, I am a mundane woman (*guṇa-prakṛtir*) controlled by the three *guṇas*. Therefore, I am vastly inferior to You, so how can I be even imagined as equal to You?"

Although Rukmiṇī is the goddess of fortune, due to her extreme humility she is identifying herself with Kṛṣṇa's external energy, which in fact is her expansion.

|| 10.60.35 ||

satyaṁ bhayād iva guṇebhya urukramāntaḥ

śete samudra upalambhana-mātra ātmā

nityaṁ kad-indriya-gaṇaiḥ kṛta-vigrahas tvaṁ

tvat-sevakair nṛpa-padaṁ vidhutaṁ tamo 'ndham

TRANSLATION

Yes, my Lord Urukrama, You lay down within the ocean as if afraid of the material modes, and thus in pure consciousness You appear within the heart as the Supersoul. You are always battling against the foolish material senses, and indeed even Your servants reject the privilege of royal dominion, which leads to the blindness of ignorance.

COMMENTARY

In Text 12 Kṛṣṇa said, *rājabhyo bibhyataḥ su-bhru samudraṁ śaraṇaṁ gatān*: "Out of fear of the kings, We took shelter in the ocean."

Rukmiṇī responds to this by saying, "O Urukrama" (most powerful one). This name indicates Kṛṣṇa fearlessness. The *Visva-kośa* dictionary says the word *krama* can mean power or sequence.

“It is true that actually You are fearless. You seem to have fear of the modes of nature (*gunebhyaḥ*), which are the actual rulers (*rājabhyo*) of this world because they impel all living beings to act. Because You fear that Your devotee will come under the influence of these modes of nature and become entangled in sense gratification, You enter the internal ocean of their hearts, and remain as the omniscient Supersoul (*upalambhana-mātra ātmā*) to protect Your devotees.”

Kṛṣṇa may object, “What is the proof that I reside there?”

This is answered by the statements of Brahmā: *nāpaiṣi nātha hṛdayāmburuhāt sva-puṁsām*, “For Your pure devotees, You are never separated from the lotus of their hearts.” (SB 3.9.5) Also Navayogendra Havi Rsi said: *praṇaya-rasanayā dhṛtāṅghri-padmaḥ*

sa bhavati bhāgavata-pradhāna uktaḥ, “The devotees bind Your lotus feet in their hearts with the ropes of love.” (SB 11.2.55)

Rukmiṇī continued, “As the Supersoul (*ātmā:paramātmā*) You are perceived in terms of the *mātras* (sense objects) namely taste, form, sound and touch. Your transcendental beauty and other qualities are perceived by Your devotees through meditation.” In other words *upalambhana-mātraḥ* also indicates that Kṛṣṇa is the sole object of meditation for His devotees.

In Text 12 Kṛṣṇa also said, *balavadbhiḥ kṛta-dveṣān*: “We created enmity with the powerful.” Rukmiṇī replies, “It is the material senses which are actually powerful in this world. You take up the battle (*kṛta-vigrahas*) against sense gratification (*indriya-gaṇaiḥ*) on the part of Your devotees, and thus You constantly try to help them in their struggle for spiritual purity. In the beginning the *sādhaka* realizes a little of Your sweetness through meditation, but does not see You directly. It appears that You enter their hearts and go to sleep as if out of fear of the sense objects. When the devotee’s attachment to You matures and he conquers the enemy senses, he loses his attraction for the sense objects. Then You manifest Yourself, as if rising up from sleep. You become directly visible to the devotee and give him Your full sweetness. At that time, the eternal loving relationship between You and Your devotees becomes an irrevocable fact.”

In the same verse Kṛṣṇa stated, *tyakta-nṛpāsanān*: “We renounced the royal throne.” Rukmiṇī responds saying, “Yes that is quite proper. Your servants (*sevakaiḥ*) also give up royal positions and political posts because it gives rise to complete loss of discrimination. If they do so, what to speak of You?” By the reference to the servants

(*sevakaiḥ*) here, it can be understood that the previous statements of this verse are in relation to Kṛṣṇa's devotees, not the Lord. For Kṛṣṇa does not fear or battle with the senses, but He does so in relation to His devotee.

|| 10.60.36 ||

tvat-pāda-padma-makaranda-juṣāṁ munīnāṁ

vartmāsphuṭaṁ nr-paśubhir nanu durvibhāvyam

yasmād alaukikam ivehitam īśvarasya

bhūmaṁs tavehitam atho anu ye bhavantam

TRANSLATION

Your movements, inscrutable even for sages who relish the honey of Your lotus feet, are certainly incomprehensible for human beings who behave like animals. And just as Your activities are transcendental, O all-powerful Lord, so too are those of Your followers.

COMMENTARY

Here Rukmiṇī replies to Kṛṣṇa's statement in Text 13: *aspaṣṭa-vartmanāṁ puṁsām aloka-patham īyuṣām āsthitāḥ padavīṁ su-bhru prāyaḥ sīdanti yoṣitaḥ*, "O fine-browed lady, women are usually destined to suffer when they stay with men whose behavior is uncertain and who pursue a path not approved by society."

Rukmiṇī said, "Yes it is true, because Your activities are always transcendental they are unfathomable (*aspaṣṭa*) even to the sages. And certainly (*nanu*) they are incomprehensible to the animalistic men entangled in worldly behavior. It is true that You do not follow the customary path (*aloka-patham*). Your endeavors transcend (*alaukikam*) this world, therefore the endeavors even of those who follow You are also transcendental."

|| 10.60.37 ||

niṣkiñcano nanu bhavān na yato 'sti kiñcid

yasmai baliṁ bali-bhujo 'pi haranty ajādyāḥ

na tvā vidanty asu-tṛpo 'ntakam āḍhyatāndhāḥ

preṣṭho bhavān bali-bhujām api te 'pi tubhyam

TRANSLATION

You possess nothing because there is nothing beyond You. Even the great enjoyers of tribute—Brahmā and other demigods—pay tribute to You. Those who are blinded by their wealth and absorbed in gratifying their senses do not recognize You in the form of death. But to the gods, the enjoyers of tribute, You are the most dear, as they are to You.

COMMENTARY

Here Rukmiṇī replies to Kṛṣṇa's statement in Text 14: *niṣkiñcanā vayaṁ śaśvan niṣkiñcana-jana-priyāḥ tasmāt prāyeṇa na hy āḍhyā māṁ bhajanti su-madhyame*, "We have no material possessions, and We are dear to those who similarly have nothing. Therefore, O slender one, the wealthy hardly ever worship Me."

Rukmiṇī said, "You are indeed *niṣkiñcana* (*niṣkiñcano nanu*)." The word *kiñcana* means "something," and the prefix *nir*—or, as it appears here, *nis*—indicates negation. Thus in the ordinary sense *niṣkiñcana* means "one who has nothing."

Rukmiṇī said, "You are *niṣkiñcana* in the sense that nothing is greater than You. And You are *niṣkiñcana* in the sense that You do not only have some (*kiñcana*) opulence, power, sweetness fame, strength, knowledge and renunciation, but You possess all of these in complete measure, since You are source of all emanations."

"The meaning of *niṣkiñcana* as poverty stricken does not apply to You at all, because Brahmā and all the greatest demigods, who are worshiped by all others, worship You."

Rukmiṇī replied to Kṛṣṇa's statement that wealthy men do not worship Him by saying, "Those materialistic men, blinded by wealth, whose very life is their money, do not know You as death, as the punisher. What to speak then, of their worshiping You?"

In Text 14 Lord Kṛṣṇa also stated, *niṣkiñcana-jana-priyāh*: "I am dear to those who have nothing." To this Rukmiṇī replied, "Brahmā and other demigods, who are the wealthiest persons in the universe, regularly offer tribute to You. Since You are the dear most of

the mixed devotees (*sakāma-bhaktas*) like Brahmā, what to speak of the devotees devoid of material desires (*niṣkāma-bhaktas*)."

Those who do not desire to engage in anything else, acquire anything else or inquire into anything else other than worship of the Lord are called *niṣkiñcana* by the wise. According to the statements of the *Purāṇas*, the word *niṣkiñcana* means the devotee of the Lord.

|| 10.60.38 ||

tvaṁ vai samasta-puruṣārtha-mayaḥ phalātmā

yad-vāñchayā su-matayo visṛjanti kṛtsnam

teṣāṁ vibho samucito bhavataḥ samājaḥ

puṁsaḥ striyāś ca ratayoḥ sukha-duḥkhinor na

TRANSLATION

You are the embodiment of all human goals and are Yourself the final aim of life. Desiring to attain You, O all-powerful Lord, intelligent persons abandon everything else. It is they who are worthy of Your association, not men and women absorbed in the pleasure and grief resulting from their mutual lust.

COMMENTARY

Here Rukmiṇī refutes Kṛṣṇa's statement in Text 15: *yayor ātma-samaṁ vittaṁ janmaiśvaryākṛtir bhavaḥ tayor vivāho maitrī ca nottamādhamayoḥ kvacit*, "Marriage and friendship are proper between two people who are equal in terms of their wealth, birth, influence, physical appearance and capacity for good progeny, but never between a superior and an inferior."

Rukmiṇī said, "You have said that one should marry only a person equal in wealth. That is possible for others, but not for You. You are the end goal (*phalātmā*) of all human endeavors. The association (*samājaḥ*) or relation is between the served and servitor, between Nārāyaṇa and Lakṣmī, between You and myself, not between a mundane man and woman who are attracted in mutual lust."

|| 10.60.39 ||

tvaṁ nyasta-daṇḍa-munibhir gaditānubhāva

ātmātma-daś ca jagatām iti me vṛto 'si

hitvā bhavad-bhruva udīrita-kāla-vega-

dhvastāśiṣo 'bja-bhava-nāka-patīn kuto 'nye

TRANSLATION

Knowing that great sages who have renounced the sannyāsī's daṇḍa proclaim Your glories, that You are the Supreme Soul of all the worlds, and that You are so gracious that You give away even Your own self, I chose You as my husband, rejecting Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva and the rulers of heaven, whose aspirations are all frustrated by the force of time, which is born from Your eyebrows. What interest, then, could I have in any other suitors?

COMMENTARY

In this verse Rukmiṇī refutes Kṛṣṇa's statement in Text 16: *bhikṣubhiḥ ślāghitā mudhā*, "O fool, I am praised only by beggars," by explaining the superexcellence of being praised by beggars (*bhiksus*).

Rukmiṇī said, "Those so called beggars (*bhiksus*) are actually sages in the *paramahaṁsa* stage of life who have reached the highest level of spiritual advancement and thus given up the *sannyāsī rod* (*danda*). Your powers are glorified (*gaditānubhāva*) by such *bhiksus* or *paramahaṁsas*. Everything becomes auspicious by praising You, the Soul of all souls (*ātmātma:paramātmā*). Therefore, praising You is not foolish (*mudhā*). Rather if You say it is foolish, You are foolish (*mudhā*)!"

"Knowing that You give Yourself to those in the universe (*ātma-daś ca jagatām*) who worship You, I have chosen You as my husband. Nevertheless You have said *vaidarbhy etad avijñāya*: 'My dear Vaidarbhī, out of ignorance you have chosen Me as your husband.'"

"This shows You did not know my intelligence in this matter. I have chosen You after rejecting lesser personalities like Brahmā and Śiva, whose benedictions are all destroyed by the force of time emanating from the movement of Your eyebrows. What then to speak of my rejecting inferior persons like those kings? My dear husband, Your accusation that I lack foresight (*tvayādīrgha-samīkṣayā*, text 16) indicates that You did

know of my deep insight into the situation. Actually, I chose You because I clearly understood Your true glories."

|| 10.60.40 ||

jāḍyaṁ vacas tava gadāgraja yas tu bhūpān

vidrāvya śārṅga-ninadena jahartha māṁ tvam

siṁho yathā sva-balim īśa paśūn sva-bhāgaṁ

tebhyo bhayād yad udadhiṁ śaraṇaṁ prapannaḥ

TRANSLATION

My Lord, as a lion drives away lesser animals to claim his proper tribute, You drove off the assembled kings with the resounding twang of Your Śārṅga bow and then claimed me, Your fair share. Thus it is sheer foolishness, my dear Gadāgraja, for You to say You took shelter in the ocean out of fear of those kings.

COMMENTARY

In Text 12 Kṛṣṇa said, *rājabhyo bibhyataḥ su-bhru samudraṁ śaranaṁ gatān*: "Terrified of those kings, We went to the ocean for shelter." Then suddenly Rukmiṇī manifested the *sthāyi-bhāva* of *māna* (anger). Having already hinted at Kṛṣṇa's ignorance of her knowledge and foresight, Rukmiṇī became provoked to anger by hearing Kṛṣṇa glorifying other men who might have become her husband. Rukmiṇī clearly indicates Kṛṣṇa's ignorance while frowning and casting angry sidelong glances at Him.

Rukmiṇī said, "Your words are foolish (*jādyaṁ vacas tava*). Like a lion You defeated all the other kings and took me away as Your prize. Therefore, it is simply foolishness to say that out of fear of those same kings You went to the ocean."

"But," Kṛṣṇa may object, "Earlier (verse 35) you said that it was true that I took shelter of the ocean out of fear."

Rukmiṇī, "Yes, but that was my foolishness."

|| 10.60.41 ||

yad-vāñchayā nṛpa-śikhāmaṇayo 'nga-vainya-

jāyanta-nāhuṣa-gayādaya aikya-patyam

rājyaṁ visṛjya viviśur vanam ambujākṣa

sīdanti te 'nupadavīṁ ta ihāsthitāḥ kim

TRANSLATION

Wanting Your association, the best of kings—Aṅga, Vainya, Jāyanta, Nāhuṣa, Gaya and others—abandoned their absolute sovereignty and entered the forest to seek You out. How could those kings suffer frustration in this world, O lotus-eyed one?

COMMENTARY

In this verse Rukmiṇī intends to tell Kṛṣṇa, "You said that, 'Women who follow My path generally suffer,' (*āsthitāḥ padavīṁ su-bhru prāyaḥ sīdanti yoṣitaḥ*, text 13). That is also a foolish statement. You have also said that I, a king's daughter, am unintelligent and frustrated because I married You. But how can You accuse all the great enlightened kings like Jāyanta (Bharata) of being unintelligent? They were the wisest of men, yet they gave up everything to follow You and were certainly not frustrated by the result. Indeed, they achieved the perfection of Your association."

|| 10.60.42 ||

kānyaṁ śrayeta tava pāda-saroja-gandham

āghrāya san-mukharitaṁ janatāpavargam

lakṣmy-ālayaṁ tv avigaṇayya guṇālayasya

martyā sadoru-bhayam artha-viviita-dṛṣṭiḥ

TRANSLATION

The aroma of Your lotus feet, which is glorified by great saints, awards people liberation and is the abode of Goddess Lakṣmī. What woman would take shelter of any other man after savoring that aroma? Since You are the abode of transcendental qualities, what mortal woman with the insight to distinguish her own true interest would disregard that fragrance and depend instead on someone who is always subject to terrible fear?

COMMENTARY

In two verses (42-43), Rukmiṇī replies to Kṛṣṇa's statement, "You should choose a more suitable husband" (*bhajasva ksatriyarṣabham*, text 17).

Rukmiṇī said, "Only a woman who has never heard Your glories would take shelter of another husband. What mortal woman, who has once smelled the fragrance of Your lotus feet or heard Your glories praised by sages (*san-mukharitam:stutam*) who are like bees, would accept anyone but You? One becomes liberated simply by hearing or chanting Your glories. Conversely, anyone who does not appreciate Your topics, such as a man-eater or the daughter of a witch, will take shelter of someone else and consequently always experience great fear. How could any sane, discriminating woman (*artha-vivikta-dṛṣtiḥ*) take shelter of anyone but You?"

In Text 16 Kṛṣṇa said that He was *guṇair hīnāḥ*, "bereft of all good qualities." To refute this claim, Rukmiṇī states that Kṛṣṇa is *guṇālayasya*, "the abode of all transcendental qualities."

|| 10.60.43 ||

taṁ tvānurūpam abhajaṁ jagatām adhīśam

ātmānam atra ca paratra ca kāma-pūram

syān me tavāṅghrir araṇaṁ sṛtibhir bhramantyā

yo vai bhajantam upayāty anṛtāpavargaḥ

TRANSLATION

Because You are suitable for me, I have chosen You, the master and Supreme Soul of all the worlds, who fulfill our desires in this life and the next. May Your feet, which give freedom from illusion by approaching their worshiper, give shelter to me, who have been wandering from one material situation to another.

COMMENTARY

Rukmiṇī said, "But I am the daughter of a human, however, so after hearing about Your qualities I have taken full shelter of You. Because You are suitalbe as My very Supersoul (*ātmānam*) I should surrender to You who are most favorable to me."

With the sudden appearance of the *sthāyi-bhāva* known as humility (*dainya*), Rukmiṇī, though she is the eternally liberated consort of Kṛṣṇa, humbly thinks of herself as an ordinary human bound by *karma*. She then prays for the opportunity to worship the Lord: "May I attain the shelter of Your lotus feet after wandering for many births (*sṛtibhiḥ*)."

An alternate reading for the word *sṛtibhiḥ* is *śrutibhiḥ*, in which case the idea Rukmiṇī expresses is this: "Oh my beloved, I was bewildered by hearing about Your various incarnations. I heard that when You descended as Rāma, You abandoned Your wife Sītā, and that in this life You abandoned the *gopīs*. Also by hearing just now the way You have been speaking, I am experiencing delusion and various confusing doubts. Nevertheless, Your lotus feet have mercifully approached Your worshiper, coming of their own accord to destroy a multitude of illusions. May I surrender unto Your lotus feet, which give happiness and a continuous taste of nectar to persons like us."

Rukmiṇī hints that she would rather surrender to Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet than His lotus face, because that face, with His mouth and words, sometimes emanates poison, even death inflicting poison. At other times Kṛṣṇa's face gives life restoring nectar.

|| 10.60.44 ||

tasyāḥ syur acyuta nṛpā bhavatopadiṣṭāḥ

strīṇāṁ gṛheṣu khara-go-śva-viḍāla-bhṛtyāḥ

yat-karṇa-mūlam an-karṣaṇa nopayāyād

yuṣmat-kathā mṛḍa-viriñca-sabhāsu gītā

TRANSLATION

O infallible Kṛṣṇa, let each of the kings You named become the husband of a woman whose ears have never heard Your glories, which are sung in the assemblies of Śiva and Brahmā. After all, in the households of such women these kings live like asses, oxen, dogs, cats and slaves.

COMMENTARY

Pointing her index finger at Kṛṣṇa with jealous anger, Rukmiṇī spoke fiery words to condemn the kings whom Kṛṣṇa had praised in verse ten of this chapter. Rukmiṇī said, "These so called great kings are like asses because their wives sometimes kick them.

They resemble dogs because they behave inimically toward outsiders in order to protect their home. They are like cats because they eat the remnants of their wives, and resemble slaves because they are servile in family affairs. Such kings may appear desirable to a foolish woman who has not heard or understood Your unlimited glories. O destroyer of enemies (*an-karṣaṇa:ari-karṣaṇa*), You drag my enemies like Śiśupāla to the kingdom of death."

|| 10.60.45 ||

tvak-śmaśru-roma-nakha-keśa-pinaddham antar

māṁsāsthi-rakta-kṛmi-viṭ-kapha-pitta-vātam

jīvac-chavaṁ bhajati kānta-matir vimūḍhā

yā te padābja-makarandam ajighratī strī

TRANSLATION

A woman who fails to relish the fragrance of the honey of Your lotus feet becomes totally befooled, and thus she accepts as her husband or lover a living corpse covered with skin, whiskers, nails, head-hair and body-hair and filled with flesh, bones, blood, parasites, feces, mucus, bile and air.

COMMENTARY

Rukmiṇī said, "On the authority of the scriptural statement *sa vai patiḥ syād akuto-bhayaḥ svayam*: 'He indeed should become one's husband who can remove all fear,' You alone qualify as the real husband for all women at all times. An ordinary husband's body is covered on the outside by skin and hair. Otherwise it would be become overwhelmed with flies and millions of other insects and vermin attracted by its foul smell and other offensive qualities. And inside the husband's body is filled with blood, bones, feces, flesh, bile, worms and phlegm."

She who thinks of this living corpse as "my husband" and worships him is simply a fool. Why are they so foolish? The honey sweetness of Your lotus feet, and the fact that You possess an eternal transcendental body, full of knowledge and bliss is well known. Yet due to being whipped up into a tempest by the reciters of the *Purāṇas*, foolish women reject You."

|| 10.60.46 ||

astv ambujākṣa mama te caraṇānurāga

ātman ratasya mayi cānatirikta-dṛṣṭeḥ

yarhy asya vṛddhaya upātta-rajo-'ti-mātro

mām īkṣase tad u ha naḥ paramānukampā

TRANSLATION

O lotus-eyed one, though You are satisfied within Yourself and thus rarely turn Your attention toward me, please bless me with steady love for Your feet. It is when You assume a predominance of passion in order to manifest the universe that You glance upon me, showing me what is indeed Your greatest mercy.

COMMENTARY

Here Rukmiṇī replies to Kṛṣṇa's statement regarding His indifference to family life, "Always satisfied within Ourselves, We care nothing for wives, children and wealth." (Text 20)

Just by pondering over Kṛṣṇa's indifference or neutrality Rukmiṇī reached a state of calmness in the *sthāyi-bhāva* known as neutrality (*sthāna*). Then submerging in an ocean of humility, she spoke this verse: "Let me have loving attachment to Your feet even if You are indifferent. Your indifference to me is appropriate, since You glance on the entire universe with indifference. Because You take pleasure within Yourself (*ātman ratasya:ātmārāma*) You rarely look at me."

Humbly identifying herself with Kṛṣṇa's external energy, which is her expansion, Rukmiṇī says, "Though You do not often look at me, when You are ready to manifest the material universe and thus begin to work through the mode of passion, which is Your potency, then You will certainly (*u*) glance upon me and I will rejoice (*ha*). It will be a great display of mercy for me, and I will accept it as my greatest fortune."

The inner meaning of Rukmiṇī's statement is as follows: Rukmiṇī said, "Actually You are very attached to me, as attested by Your own words, I am also thinking about her so much that I cannot sleep at night, *tathāham api tac-citto nidrāṁ ca na labhe niśi*.' (SB 10.53.2) Yet from Your statement *udāsīnā vayaṁ* (text 20), we see that You are indifferent. Therefore, if You are attracted to me then I must be Your supreme, internal potency (*svarūpa-śakti*). Thus even though You are self-satisfied (*ātman ratasya*), You take pleasure in me. But if I am Your external, material energy, then You will be

indifferent to me. In this way You have both attitudes toward me, and I am in both kinds of relationship with You."

|| 10.60.47 ||

naivālīkam ahaṁ manye vacas te madhusūdana

ambāyā eva hi prāyaḥ kanyāyāḥ syād ratiḥ kvacit

TRANSLATION

Actually, I don't consider Your words false, Madhūsudana. Quite often an unmarried girl is attracted to a man, as in the case of Ambā.

COMMENTARY

Rukmiṇī said, "Or else, You are teaching other men about ordinary female psychology by using me as an example since I am a woman."

Having refuted everything Kṛṣṇa said, Rukmiṇī, in a gracious frame of mind, now praises the truthfulness of His statements: "Thus I do not consider Your statements that I should marry a person of similar qualities to be false. After all, in this world sometimes a woman becomes attracted to some man before marriage. For example, of the three daughters of the king of Kāśī, Ambikā, Ambālikā and Ambā, Ambā became attracted to Śālva."

|| 10.60.48 ||

vyūḍhāyāś cāpi puṁścalyā mano 'bhyeti navaṁ navam

budho 'satīṁ na bibhṛyāt tāṁ bibhrad ubhaya-cyutaḥ

TRANSLATION

The mind of a promiscuous woman always hankers for new lovers, even if she is married. An intelligent man should not keep such an unchaste wife, for if he does he will lose his good fortune both in this life and the next.

COMMENTARY

Rukmiṇī said, “Even married women may desire newer and newer lovers. An intelligent man will not marry such a woman, for he will suffer in this life and the next. You, being omniscient, would have rejected me already if You had known me to be like this.”

|| 10.60.49 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

sādhvy etac-chrotu-kāmais tvaṁ rāja-putrī pralambhitā

mayoditaṁ yad anvāttha sarvaṁ tat satyam eva hi

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord said: O saintly lady, O princess, We deceived you only because We wanted to hear you speak like this. Indeed, everything you said in reply to My words is most certainly true.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “We joked with you, wanting to hear (*chrotu:śrotu-kāmais*) your words.” *Śrotu-kāmais* is in the plural to indicate that not only Kṛṣṇa, but some of Rukmiṇī’s maidservants also wanted to hear. The plural can also indicate that all the functions of Kṛṣṇa’s sense of hearing desired to enjoy the fun (*pralambhitā:upahasitā*) of hearing Rukmiṇī’s statements.

Kṛṣṇa said, “Having been the object of My jokes, you interpreted whatever I said in another way (*anu-āttha*) which was most certainly true.”

|| 10.60.50 ||

yān yān kāmayase kāmān mayy akāmāya bhāmini

santi hy ekānta-bhaktāyās tava kalyāṇi nityada

TRANSLATION

Whatever benedictions you hope for in order to become free of material desires are ever yours, O fair and noble lady, for you are My unalloyed devotee.

COMMENTARY

"What benediction can I, who am supremely satisfied, give to her?" Thinking thus, Kṛṣṇa said, "Whatever desires you have in regards to serving Me and Me alone in pure love, free from all self interest (*akāmāya:kāma-bhinnāya*) are all fulfilled."

"O woman full of *prema* (*kāminī*)!" The alternate reading is *bhāmini*, "O angry one" indicating that Rukmiṇī was angry because Kṛṣṇa obstructed her service with His crooked words. By describing Rukmiṇī as *ekānta-bhaktāyās* "My unalloyed devotee," Kṛṣṇa excludes any material meanings to the words *kāmayase* and *kāmān*.

|| 10.60.51 ||

upalabdhaṁ pati-prema pāti-vratyaṁ ca te 'naghe

yad vākyaiś cālyamānāyā na dhīr mayy apakarṣitā

TRANSLATION

O sinless one, I have now seen firsthand the pure love and chaste attachment you have for your husband. Even though shaken by My words, your mind could not be pulled away from Me.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, "Even though you were somewhat disturbed by My words meant to break your love, your heart, which is filled with the most intense love for Me, did not decrease even a little in its love, what to speak of getting destroyed. Thus I have directly seen the sterling quality of your pure love. O sinless one (*anaghe*), who have committed no offense even through your servitors, please forgive Me for the offense I committed to you."

The scriptures describe the pure love between Rukmiṇī and Kṛṣṇa as follows:

sarvathā dhvaṁsa-rahitaṁ saty api dhvaṁsa-kāraṇe

yad bhāva-bandhanaṁ yūnoḥ sa premā parikīrtitaḥ

"When the love between a young man and a young woman can never be destroyed, even when there is every cause for the destruction of that love, that pure love is known as *prema*."

|| 10.60.52 ||

ye māṁ bhajanti dāmpatye tapasā vrata-caryayā

kāmātmāno 'pavargeśaṁ mohitā mama māyayā

TRANSLATION

Although I have the power to award spiritual liberation, lusty persons worship Me with penance and vows in order to get My blessings for their mundane family life. Such persons are bewildered by My illusory energy.

COMMENTARY

In this verse Kṛṣṇa condemns materialistic devotees, who, for the sake of mundane pleasures in household life (*dāmpatye*), worship the Lord with prayers like, "May my husband give me happiness" or "May my wife give me happiness."

According to a statement in the prose part of the Fifth Canto, the word *apavargeśaṁ* means "the giver of *prema*." Another meaning of *apavargeśaṁ* is "The Lord who makes the four ordinary goals of human endeavor insignificant."

|| 10.60.53 ||

māṁ prāpya māniny apavarga-sampadaṁ vāñchanti ye sampada eva tat-patim

te manda-bhāgā niraye 'pi ye nṛṇāṁ mātrātmakatvāt nirayaḥ su-saṅgamaḥ

TRANSLATION

O supreme reservoir of love, unfortunate are they who even after obtaining Me, the Lord of both liberation and material riches, hanker only for material treasures. These worldly gains can be found even in hell. Since such persons are obsessed with sense gratification, hell is a fitting place for them.

COMMENTARY

In this verse Kṛṣṇa elaborates upon what He said in the previous verse: “If after obtaining Me, the source of both inferior material wealth and the bliss of liberation, they want the paltry bliss which can be squeezed out of the mundane opulences gained from the four ordinary human endeavors, they are most unfortunate. After all, even in hell or in lower life forms like pigs and dogs one can very easily get happiness from association with women and other objects. Such unfortunate souls (*nṛṇām:jīvānām*) attached to sense gratification (*mātrā-ātmakatvāt:viśayātmakatvāt*) will take birth in hell or as pigs and other low creatures (*niraye*) in order to be completely absorbed in sense enjoyment. Such a birth is quite suitable for them.”

|| 10.60.54 ||

diṣṭyā gṛheśvary asakṛn mayi tvayā kṛtānuvṛttir bhava-mocanī khalaiḥ

su-duṣkarāsau sutarāṁ durāśiṣo hy asuṁ-bharāyā nikṛtiṁ juṣaḥ striyāḥ

TRANSLATION

Fortunately, O mistress of the house, you have always rendered Me faithful devotional service, which liberates one from material existence. This service is very difficult for the envious to perform, especially for a woman whose intentions are wicked, who lives only to gratify her bodily demands, and who indulges in duplicity.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “You have performed devotion which releases one from the bondage of the material world (*bhava-mocani:saṁsāra-bandha-mocanī*). But since you are eternally liberated already, others will become liberated by executing such devotional service.”

Rukmiṇī may object as follows: “But then will even low class women become liberated by devotion?”

Kṛṣṇa answers, “No! Women who are envious, duplicitous, and full of wicked motives for sensuous delights can never perform *bhakti*.”

|| 10.60.55 ||

na tvādṛśīm praṇayinīṁ gṛhiṇīṁ gṛheṣu

paśyāmi mānini yayā sva-vivāha-kāle

prāptān nṛpān na vigaṇayya raho-haro me

prasthāpito dvija upaśruta-sat-kathasya

TRANSLATION

In all My palaces I can find no other wife as loving as you, O most respectful one. When you were to be married, you disregarded all the kings who had assembled to seek your hand, and simply because you had heard authentic accounts concerning Me, you sent a brāhmaṇa to Me with your confidential message.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, "O *mānini* (respectful one)! Among all My loving wives, you are the best. You sent me a confidential message (*raho-haro*) through a *brāhmaṇa* after hearing many true stories (*sat-kathasya*) about Me."

Raho-haro means, "the bringer of something confidential," as defined in the *Visva-kośa* dictionary: *raho 'ti-guhye surate*, "The word *rahas* can refer to a confidential secret or else to sexual relations."

|| 10.60.56 ||

bhrātur virūpa-karaṇaṁ yudhi nirjitasya

prodvāha-parvaṇi ca tad-vadham akṣa-goṣṭhyām

duḥkhaṁ samuttham asaho 'smad-ayoga-bhītyā

naivābravīḥ kim api tena vayaṁ jitās te

TRANSLATION

When your brother, who had been defeated in battle and then disfigured, was later killed during a gambling match on Aniruddha's wedding day, you felt unbearable grief, yet out of fear of losing Me you spoke not a word. By this silence you have conquered Me.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “Your brother was killed by Baladeva at the gambling match during the wedding of Aniruddha. Out of fear of separation from Me, you did not express your sorrow or say ‘You should not have done that.’ However, for the sake of common opinion you did display slight sadness. Great joy arose from that sorrow because violence was wreaked on Rukmī, My enemy.”

From this verse it is understood that Kṛṣṇa’s talks with Rukmiṇī must have taken place after the marriage of Aniruddha.

|| 10.60.57 ||

dūtas tvayātma-labhane su-vivikta-mantraḥ

prasthāpito mayi cirāyati śūnyam etat

matvā jihāsa idaṁ aṅgam ananya-yogyaṁ

tiṣṭheta tat tvayi vayaṁ pratinandayāmaḥ

TRANSLATION

When you sent the messenger with your most confidential plan and yet I delayed going to you, you began to see the whole world as void and wanted to quit your body, which could never have been given to anyone but Me. May this greatness of yours remain with you always; I can do nothing to reciprocate except joyfully thank you for your devotion.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “When the messenger sent by you for obtaining Me was delayed, you considered the whole universe vacant and thought of giving up your life since your body was not meant for anyone else. This is what you said in your message to Me: *yarhy ambujākṣa na labheya bhavat-prasādaṁ/ jahyām asūn vrata-kṛśān śata-janmabhiḥ syāt*, ‘If I cannot obtain Your mercy, I shall simply give up my vital force, which will have become weak from the severe penances I will perform. Then, after hundreds of lifetimes of endeavor, I may obtain Your mercy.’” (SB 10.52.43)

“That action remains with you, and I cannot repay you in any way for it. I can simply rejoice (*pratinanda-yāmah:harṣayāmaḥ*).”

|| 10.60.58 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

evaṁ saurata-saṁlāpair bhagavān jagad-īśvaraḥ

sva-rato ramayā reme nara-lokaṁ viḍambayan

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: And so the self-satisfied Supreme Lord of the universe enjoyed with the goddess of fortune, engaging her in lovers' talks and thus imitating the ways of human society.

COMMENTARY

In this way the self-satisfied (*sva-rato*) Lord enjoyed through joking conjugal (*saurata*) conversations (*saṁlāpair*) with His wife (*ramayā reme*), His personal expansion. The word *viḍambayan* means "imitating" and also "ridiculing." Thus Kṛṣṇa played like a husband of this world, but by His transcendental pastimes He condemned material life by showing its inferiority to His transcendental happiness.

|| 10.60.59 ||

tathānyāsām api vibhur gṛhesu gṛhavān iva

āsthito gṛha-medhīyān dharmān loka-gurur hariḥ

TRANSLATION

The almighty Lord Hari, preceptor of all the worlds, similarly behaved like a conventional householder in the palaces of His other queens, performing the religious duties of a family man.

Thus ends the commentary on the Sixtieth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Sixty-one

Lord Balarāma Slays Rukmī

|| 10.61.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

ekaikaśas tāḥ kṛṣṇasya putrān daśa-daśābaāḥ

ajījanann anavamān pituḥ sarvātma-sampadā

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Each of Lord Kṛṣṇa's wives gave birth to ten sons, who were not less than their father, having all His personal opulence.

COMMENTARY

This chapter describes the sons and grandsons of Kṛṣṇa, and Balarāma's killing of Rukmī at the dice game during the marriage of Aniruddha. This verse indicates that Śrī Kṛṣṇa had 16,108 wives and begot 161,080 sons. These sons were not less than Kṛṣṇa in terms of their personal powers and qualities.

|| 10.61.2 ||

gṛhād anapagaṁ vīkṣya rāja-putryo 'cyutaṁ sthitam

preṣṭhaṁ nyamaṁsata svaṁ svaṁ na tat-tattva-vidaḥ striyaḥ

TRANSLATION

Because each of these princesses saw that Lord Acyuta never left her palace, each thought herself the Lord's favorite. These women did not understand the full truth about Him.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa would leave the palaces only with the permission of His queens, and thus each one considered herself His favorite. By Kṛṣṇa's inconceivable *yogamāyā* potency the queens did not know the full truth about how He creates the good fortune of all His beloved devotees.

|| 10.61.3 ||

cārv-abja-kośa-vadanāyata-bāhu-netra-

sa-prema-hāsa-rasa-vīkṣita-valgu-jalpaiḥ

sammohitā bhagavato na mano vijetuṁ

svair vibhramaiḥ samaśakan vanitā vibhūmnaḥ

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord's wives were fully enchanted by His lovely, lotuslike face, His long arms and large eyes, His loving glances imbued with laughter, and His charming talks with them. But with all their charms these ladies could not conquer the mind of the all-powerful Lord.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa's wives, who were controlled just by His spectacular beauty, had two types of conjugal affection: *prema-maya* (full of love) and *kāma-maya* (full of lust). Two verses (3-4) describe how they could not bring Kṛṣṇa under their control with their *kāma-maya* affection. The queens were totally enchanted by Kṛṣṇa's face, which was as charming as the whorl of a lotus, His long arms, elongated eyes, loving smile and His charming conversations. But none of the queens, even with all their seductive beauty, could conquer Kṛṣṇa's mind. The reason for this is stated by the word *vibhūmnaḥ*, which means that by His very nature Kṛṣṇa, and not them, is the most perfectly desirable object.

|| 10.61.4 ||

smāyāvaloka-lava-darśita-bhāva-hāri

bhrū-maṇḍala-prahita-saurata-mantra-śauṇḍaiḥ

patnyas tu śoḍaśa-sahasram anaṅga-bāṇair

yasyendriyaṁ vimathitum karaṇair na śekuḥ

TRANSLATION

The arched eyebrows of these sixteen thousand queens enchantingly expressed those ladies' secret intentions through coyly smiling sidelong glances. Thus their eyebrows boldly sent forth conjugal messages. Yet even with these arrows of Cupid, and with other means as well, they could not agitate Lord Kṛṣṇa's senses.

COMMENTARY

This verse describes their lusty allurements. Even sixteen thousand wives could not agitate Kṛṣṇa's senses with the Cupid arrows of their eyes. What type of arrows were they? They were arrows of sweet smiles showing their conjugal intentions through side-long glances, and lusty messages sent by the movements of their attractive eyebrows. They boldly (*śauṇḍaiḥ:pragalbhaiḥ*) expressed their desires to Kṛṣṇa by these and other ways described in the *Kāma-sūtra*.

|| 10.61.5 ||

itthaṁ ramā-patim avāpya patiṁ striyas tā

brahmādayo 'pi na viduḥ padavīṁ yadīyām

bhejur mudāviratam edhitayānurāga-

hāsāvaloka-nava-saṅgama-lālasādyam

TRANSLATION

Thus these women obtained as their husband the master of the goddess of fortune, although even great demigods like Brahmā do not know how to approach Him. With ever-increasing pleasure, they felt loving attraction for Him, exchanged smiling glances with Him, eagerly anticipated associating with Him in ever-fresh intimacy and enjoyed in many other ways.

COMMENTARY

This verse describes the intense conjugal attraction the queens felt for Kṛṣṇa. By showing their smiling glances full of *prema-maya* affection (*anurāga*), they enjoyed many ever-new and intimate physical exchanges (*nava-saṅgama*) with Kṛṣṇa, which were filled with great hankering because they could not be completely satisfied.

Thus it should be understood that Kṛṣṇa is controlled by the *prema-maya* (pure loving) dealings of his wives as seen in His pastime of stealing the pārijāta tree, and also from His own words: *tathāham api tac-citto nidrāṁ ca na labhe niśi*, "I cannot sleep at night because of thinking of Rukmiṇī." (SB 10.53.2) Śukadeva Gosvāmī said, *īkṣito 'ntaḥ-pura-strīṇāṁ sa-vrīḍa-prema-vīkṣitaiḥ*, "Being enchanted by their [wives] shy, loving glances, Kṛṣṇa found it difficult to leave their palaces." (SB 10.70.16) Also it is said, *reme strī-ratna-kūṭastho, bhagavān prākṛtoyathā*, "Living amongst the jewel among women, Kṛṣṇa played like an ordinary person." (SB 1.11.35)

|| 10.61.6 ||

pratyudgamāsana-varārhaṇa-pāda-śauca-

tāmbūla-viśramaṇa-vījana-gandha-mālyaiḥ

keśa-prasāra-śayana-snapanopahāryaiḥ

dāsī-śatā api vibhor vidadhuḥ sma dāsyam

TRANSLATION

Although the Supreme Lord's queens each had hundreds of maidservants, they chose to personally serve the Lord by approaching Him humbly, offering Him a seat, worshiping Him with excellent paraphernalia, bathing and massaging His feet, giving Him pān to chew, fanning Him, anointing Him with fragrant sandalwood paste, adorning Him with flower garlands, dressing His hair, arranging His bed, bathing Him and presenting Him with various gifts.

COMMENTARY

This verse describes the queen's actions of menial service to express their love (*anubhāva*), having Kṛṣṇa as the object of their *prema*. They offered Kṛṣṇa the best items (*vara arhanam*) such as handfuls of flowers (*puṣpāñjali*) and handfuls of jewels (*ratnāñjali*).

|| 10.61.7 ||

tāsāṁ yā daśa-putrāṇāṁ kṛṣṇa-strīṇāṁ puroditāḥ

aṣṭau mahiṣyas tat-putrān pradyumnādīn gṛṇāmi te

TRANSLATION

Among Lord Kṛṣṇa's wives, each of whom had ten sons, I previously mentioned eight principal queens. I shall now recite for you the names of those eight queens' sons, headed by Pradyumna.

COMMENTARY

Having described a related topic, now the main topic is introduced. Each queen had ten sons. First the sons of the eight principal queens are named.

|| 10.61.8-9 ||

cārudeṣṇaḥ sudeṣṇaś ca cārudehaś ca vīryavān

sucāruś cāruguptaś ca bhadracārus tathāparaḥ

cārucandro vicāruś ca cāruś ca daśamo hareḥ

pradyumna-pramukhā jātā rukmiṇyāṁ nāvamāḥ pituḥ

TRANSLATION

The first son of Queen Rukmiṇī was Pradyumna, and also born of her were Cārudeṣṇa, Sudeṣṇa and the powerful Cārudeha, along with Sucāru, Cārugupta, Bhadracāru, Cārucandra, Vicāru and Cāru, the tenth. None of these sons of Lord Hari was less than his father.

|| 10.61.10 ||

bhānuḥ subhānuḥ svarbhānuḥ prabhānur bhānumāṁs tathā

candrabhānur bṛhadbhānur atibhānus tathāṣṭamaḥ

śrībhānuḥ pratibhānuś ca satyabhāmātmajā daśa

sāmbaḥ sumitraḥ purujic chatajic ca sahasrajit

viyayaś citraketuś ca vasumān draviḍaḥ kratuḥ

jāmbavatyāḥ sutā hy ete sāmbādyāḥ pitṛ-sammatāḥ

TRANSLATION

The ten sons of Satyabhāmā were Bhānu, Subhānu, Svarbhānu, Prabhānu, Bhānumān, Candrabhānu, Bṛhadbhānu, Atibhānu (the eighth), Śrībhānu and Pratibhānu. Sāmba, Sumitra, Purujit, Śatajit, Sahasrajit, Vijaya, Citraketu, Vasumān, Draviḍa and Kratu were the sons of Jāmbavatī. These ten, headed by Sāmba, were their father's favorites.

|| 10.61.13 ||

vīraś candro 'śvasenaś ca citragur vegavān vṛṣaḥ

āmaḥ śaṅkur vasuḥ śrīmān kuntir nāgnajiteḥ sutāḥ

TRANSLATION

The sons of Nāgnajitī were Vīra, Candra, Aśvasena, Citragu, Vegavān, Vṛṣa, Āma, Śaṅku, Vasu and the opulent Kunti.

|| 10.61.14 ||

śrutaḥ kavir vṛṣo vīraḥ subāhur bhadra ekalaḥ

śāntir darśaḥ pūrṇamāsaḥ kālindyāḥ somako 'varaḥ

TRANSLATION

Śruta, Kavi, Vṛṣa, Vīra, Subāhu, Bhadra, Śānti, Darśa and Pūrṇamāsa were sons of Kālindī. Her youngest son was Somaka.

COMMENTARY

Among the sons of Kālindī, Bhadra was one and Somaka was the youngest (*avaraḥ*).

|| 10.61.15 ||

praghoṣo gātravān siṁho balaḥ prabala ūrdhagaḥ

mādryāḥ putrā mahāśaktiḥ saha ojo 'parājitaḥ

TRANSLATION

Mādrā's sons were Praghoṣa, Gātravān, Siṁha, Bala, Prabala, Ūrdhaga, Mahāśakti, Saha, Oja and Aparājita.

COMMENTARY

This verse describes the sons of Lakṣmaṇā, who was also known as Mādrā.

|| 10.61.16 ||

vṛko harṣo 'nilo gṛdhro vardhanonnāda eva ca

mahāṁsaḥ pāvano vahnir mitravindātmajāḥ kṣudhiḥ

TRANSLATION

Mitravindā's sons were Vṛka, Harṣa, Anila, Gṛdhra, Vardhana, Unnāda, Mahāṁsa, Pāvana, Vahni and Kṣudhi.

|| 10.61.17 ||

saṅgrāmajid bṛhatsenaḥ śūraḥ praharaṇo 'rijit

jayaḥ subhadro bhadrāyā vāma āyuś ca satyakaḥ

TRANSLATION

Saṅgrāmajit, Bṛhatsena, Śūra, Praharaṇa, Arijit, Jaya and Subhadra were the sons of Bhadrā, together with Vāma, Āyur and Satyaka.

|| 10.61.18 ||

dīptimāṁs tāmrataptādyā rohiṇyās tanayā hareḥ

pradyamnāc cāniruddho 'bhūd rukmavatyāṁ mahā-balaḥ

putryāṁ tu rukmiṇo rājan nāmnā bhojakaṭe pure

TRANSLATION

Dīptimān, Tāmratapta and others were the sons of Lord Kṛṣṇa and Rohiṇī. Lord Kṛṣṇa's son Pradyumna fathered the greatly powerful Aniruddha in the womb of Rukmavatī, the daughter of Rukmī. O King, this took place while they were living in the city of Bhojakaṭa.

COMMENTARY

Having named the sons of the principal eight queens, Śukadeva Gosvāmī now mentions the sons of Rohiṇī, the foremost of the remaining 16,100 queens.

|| 10.61.19 ||

eteṣāṁ putra-pautrāś ca babhūvuḥ koṭiśo nṛpa

mātaraḥ kṛṣṇa-jātīnāṁ sahasrāṇi ca ṣoḍaśa

TRANSLATION

My dear King, the sons and grandsons of Lord Kṛṣṇa's children numbered in the tens of millions. Sixteen thousand mothers gave rise to this dynasty.

COMMENTARY

One can count the mothers of Kṛṣṇa's offspring, but not the sons and grandsons. Kṛṣṇa's queens numbered 16,108.

|| 10.61.20 ||

śrī-rājovāca

kathaṁ rukmy arī-putrāya prādād duhitaraṁ yudhi

kṛṣṇena paribhūtas taṁ hantuṁ randhraṁ pratīkṣate

etad ākhyāhi me vidvan dviṣor vaivāhikaṁ mithaḥ

TRANSLATION

King Parīkṣit said: How could Rukmī give his daughter to his enemy's son? After all, Rukmī had been defeated by Lord Kṛṣṇa in battle and was waiting for an opportunity to kill Him. Please explain this to me, O learned one—how these two inimical parties became united through marriage.

COMMENTARY

Parīkṣit Mahārāja asked, "Why did Rukmī, who was waiting for the opportunity to kill Kṛṣṇa, give his daughter in marriage (*vaivāhikam*) to Kṛṣṇa's son Pradyumna?"

|| 10.61.21 ||

anāgatam atītaṁ ca vartamānam atīndriyam

viprakṛṣṭaṁ vyavahitaṁ samyak paśyanti yoginaḥ

TRANSLATION

Mystic yogīs can perfectly see that which has not yet happened, as well as things in the past or present, beyond the senses, remote or blocked by physical obstacles.

COMMENTARY

In this verse Parīkṣit expresses to Śukadeva, "You cannot say that you do not know."

|| 10.61.22 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

vṛtaḥ svayaṁ-vare sākṣād anaṇgo 'ṇga-yutas tayā

rājñaḥ sametān nirjitya jahāraika-ratho yudhi

TRANSLATION

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: At her svayaṁ-vara ceremony, Rukmavatī herself chose Pradyumna, who was the re-embodiment of Cupid. Then, although He fought alone on a single chariot, Pradyumna defeated the assembled kings in battle and took her away.

COMMENTARY

But fearing that he could not show convincingly that Rukmī would want to give his daughter to the son of his enemy, Śukadeva Gosvāmī explains how Rukmī held a *svayaṁ-vara* ceremony for his daughter's marriage in order to escape the infamy of giving his daughter to his enemy's son.

|| 10.61.23 ||

yady apy anusmaran vairaṁ rukmī kṛṣṇāvamānitaḥ

vyatarad bhāgineyāya sutāṁ kurvan svasuḥ priyam

TRANSLATION

Though Rukmī always remembered his enmity toward Lord Kṛṣṇa, who had insulted him, in order to please his sister he sanctioned his daughter's marriage to his nephew.

COMMENTARY

The answer to King Parīkṣit's question is given here. Ultimately Rukmī approved his daughter's marriage to Kṛṣṇa's son Pradyumna in order to please his sister, Rukmiṇī, who had saved his life.

|| 10.61.24 ||

rukmiṇyās tanayāṁ rājan kṛtavarma-suto balī

upayeme viśālākṣīṁ kanyāṁ cārumatīṁ kila

TRANSLATION

O King, Balī, the son of Kṛtavarmā, married Rukmiṇī's young daughter, large-eyed Cārumatī.

COMMENTARY

Each queen had one daughter. In describing the marriage of Rukmiṇī's eldest daughter Cārumatī, to Kṛtavarmā's son Balī, the marriage of all the daughters is indicated.

|| 10.61.25 ||

dauhitrāyāniruddhāya pautrīṁ rukmy ādadād dhareḥ

rocanāṁ baddha-vairo 'pi svasuḥ priya-cikīrṣayā

jānann adharmaṁ tad yaunaṁ sneha-pāśānubandhanaḥ

TRANSLATION

Rukmī gave his granddaughter Rocanā to his daughter's son, Aniruddha, despite Rukmī's relentless feud with Lord Hari. Although Rukmī considered this marriage irreligious, he wanted to please his sister, bound as he was by the ropes of affection.

COMMENTARY

Rukmī agreed to the marriage (*yaunaṁ*) of his granddaughter to Rukmiṇī's grandson Aniruddha, though it was considered irreligious (*adharmaṁ*). According to worldly standards one should not give one's beloved granddaughter to the grandson of one's bitter enemy.

Thus we find the following injunction: *dviṣad-annaṁ na bhoktavyaṁ dviṣantaṁ naiva bhojayet*. "One should not eat an enemy's food or feed an enemy." There is also the following prohibition: *asvargyaṁ loka-vidviṣṭaṁ dharmam apy ācaren na tu*. "One should not execute religious injunctions if they will obstruct one's elevation to heaven, or if they are condemned by human society."

|| 10.61.26 ||

tasminn abhyudaye rājan rukmiṇī rāma-keśavau

puraṁ bhojakaṭaṁ jagmuḥ sāmba-pradyumnakādayaḥ

TRANSLATION

On the joyous occasion of that marriage, O King, Queen Rukmiṇī, Lord Balarāma, Lord Kṛṣṇa and several of the Lord's sons, headed by Sāmba and Pradyumna, went to the city of Bhojakaṭa.

|| 10.61.27-28 ||

tasmin nivṛtta udvāhe kāliṅga-pramukhā nṛpāḥ

dṛptās te rukmiṇaṁ procur balam akṣair vinirjaya

anakṣa-jño hy ayaṁ rājann api tad-vyasanaṁ mahat

ity ukto balam āhūya tenākṣair rukmy adīvyata

TRANSLATION

After the wedding, a group of arrogant kings headed by the King of Kaliṅga told Rukmī, "You should defeat Balarāma at dice. He's not expert at dice, O King, but still He's quite addicted to it." Thus advised, Rukmī challenged Balarāma and began a gambling match with Him.

COMMENTARY

Deciding that it would be difficult to defeat Kṛṣṇa even in gambling, they told Rukmī to invite Balarāma (*balam*) to a game of dice.

|| 10.61.29 ||

śataṁ sahasram ayutaṁ rāmas tatrādade paṇam

taṁ tu rukmy ajayat tatra kāliṅgaḥ prāhasad balam

dantān sandarśayann uccair nāmṛṣyat tad dhalāyudhaḥ

TRANSLATION

In that match Lord Balarāma first accepted a wager of one hundred coins, then one thousand, then ten thousand. Rukmī won this first round, and the King of Kaliṅga laughed loudly at Lord Balarāma, showing all his teeth. Lord Balarāma could not tolerate this.

COMMENTARY

First the wager was a hundred gold coins, then a thousand gold coins and ten thousand gold coins. The word *na amṛṣyat*, "could not tolerate" means that Balarāma became inwardly angry when the King of Kaliṅga laughed and showed his teeth.

|| 10.61.30 ||

tato lakṣaṁ rukmy agṛhṇād glahaṁ tatrājayad balaḥ

jitavān aham ity āha rukmī kaitavam āśritaḥ

TRANSLATION

Next Rukmī accepted a bet of one hundred thousand coins, which Lord Balarāma won. But Rukmī tried to cheat, declaring "I'm the winner!"

COMMENTARY

Though Balarāma won the wager of a hundred thousand coins, Rukmī tried to cheat saying he had won.

|| 10.61.31 ||

manyunā kṣubhitaḥ śrīmān samudra iva parvaṇi

jātyāruṇākṣo 'ti-ruṣā nyarbudaṁ glaham ādade

TRANSLATION

Shaking with anger like the ocean on the full-moon day, handsome Lord Balarāma, His naturally reddish eyes even redder in His fury, accepted a wager of one hundred million gold coins.

COMMENTARY

Balarāma accepted a wager of one hundred million gold coins (*nyarbudam*).

|| 10.61.32 ||

taṁ cāpi jitavān rāmo dharmeṇa chalam āśritaḥ

rukmī jitaṁ mayātreme vadantu prāśnikā iti

TRANSLATION

Lord Balarāma fairly won this wager also, but Rukmī again resorted to cheating and declared, "I have won! Let these witnesses here say what they saw."

COMMENTARY

Resorting to deceit, Rukmī said, "I have won. The witnesses (*prāśnikāḥ*) can testify to this."

|| 10.61.33 ||

tadābravīn nabho-vāṇī balenaiva jito glahaḥ

dharmato vacanenaiva rukmī vadati vai mṛṣā

TRANSLATION

Just then a voice from the sky declared, "Balarāma has fairly won this wager. Rukmī is surely lying."

COMMENTARY

When the sinful kings were giving false testimony that Rukmī had won, a voice from the sky (*nabho-vāṇī*) proclaimed, "Balarāma speaks correctly and has won. Rukmī is lying."

|| 10.61.34 ||

tām anādṛtya vaidarbho duṣṭa-rājanya-coditaḥ

saṅkarṣaṇaṁ parihasan babhāṣe kāla-coditaḥ

TRANSLATION

Urged on by the wicked kings, Rukmī ignored the divine voice. In fact destiny itself was urging Rukmī on, and thus he ridiculed Lord Balarāma as follows.

|| 10.61.35 ||

naivākṣa-kovidā yūyaṁ gopālā vana-gocarāḥ

akṣair dīvyanti rājāno bāṇaiś ca na bhavādṛśāḥ

TRANSLATION

[Rukmī said:] You cowherds who wander about the forests know nothing about dice. Playing with dice and sporting with arrows are only for kings, not for the likes of You.

|| 10.61.36 ||

rukmiṇaivam adhikṣipto rājabhiś copahāsitaḥ

kruddhaḥ parigham udyamya jaghne taṁ nṛmṇa-saṁsadi

TRANSLATION

Thus insulted by Rukmī and ridiculed by the kings, Lord Balarāma was provoked to anger. In the midst of the auspicious wedding assembly, He raised His club and struck Rukmī dead.

COMMENTARY

In the auspicious wedding assembly (*nṛmṇa-saṁsadi:maṇgala-sabhāyām*) Balarāma raised his club and struck Rukmī dead.

|| 10.61.37 ||

kaliṅga-rājaṁ tarasā gṛhītvā daśame pade

dantān apātayat kruddho yo 'hasad vivṛtair dvijaiḥ

TRANSLATION

The King of Kaliṅga, who had laughed at Lord Balarāma and shown his teeth, tried to run away, but the furious Lord quickly seized him on his tenth step and knocked out all his teeth.

|| 10.61.38 ||

anye nirbhinna-bāhūru- śiraso rudhirokṣitāḥ

rājāno dudravar bhītā balena paṅghārditāḥ

TRANSLATION

Tormented by Lord Balarāma's club, the other kings fled in fear, their arms, thighs and heads broken and their bodies drenched in blood.

|| 10.61.39 ||

nihate rukmiṇi śyāle nābravīt sādhv asādhu vā

rakmiṇī-balayo rājan sneha-bhaṅga-bhayād dhariḥ

TRANSLATION

When His brother-in-law Rukmī was slain, Lord Kṛṣṇa neither applauded nor protested, O King, for He feared jeopardizing His affectionate ties with either Rukmiṇī or Balarāma.

|| 10.61.40 ||

tato 'niruddhaṁ saha sūryayā varaṁ rathaṁ samāropya yayuḥ kuśasthalīm

rāmādayo bhojakaṭād daśārhāḥ siddhākhilārthā madhusūdanāśrayāḥ

TRANSLATION

Then the descendants of Daśārha, headed by Lord Balarāma, seated Aniruddha and His bride on a fine chariot and set off from Bhojakaṭa for Dvārakā. Having taken shelter of Lord Madhusūdana, they had fulfilled all their purposes.

COMMENTARY

With all their desires fulfilled, they put Aniruddha on a chariot with his new bride (*sūryayā*) and departed for Dvārakā. Even though Rukmiṇī was very dear to all the Dāśārhas, they were extremely satisfied with Rukmī's sudden death. Rukmiṇī was also happy within, since her affection for Rukmī was only external. The statement in verse thirty-nine that Kṛṣṇa was silent out of fear of breaking His affectionate ties with Balarāma and Rukmiṇī is based on the fact that Rukmiṇī had affection for Rukmī only externally.

Thus ends the commentary on the Sixty-first Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Sixty-two

The Meeting of Ūṣā and Aniruddha

|| 10.62.1 ||

śrī-rājovāca

bāṇasya tanayām ūṣām upayeme yadūttamaḥ

tatra yuddham abhūd ghoraṁ hari-śaṅkarayor mahat

etat sarvaṁ mahā-yogin samākhyātuṁ tvam arhasi

TRANSLATION

King Parīkṣit said: The best of the Yadus married Bāṇāsura's daughter, Ūṣā, and as a result a great, fearsome battle occurred between Lord Hari and Lord Śaṅkara. Please explain everything about this incident, O most powerful of mystics.

COMMENTARY

This chapter discusses the affair between Ūṣā and Aniruddha, who was brought to her by Citralekhā, and how Bāṇāsura arrested Aniruddha.

|| 10.62.2 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

bāṇaḥ putra-śata-jyeṣṭho baler āsīn mahātmanaḥ

yena vāmana-rūpāya haraye 'dāyi medinī

tasyaurasaḥ suto bānaḥ śiva-bhakti-rataḥ sadā

mānyo vadānyo dhīmāṁś ca satya-sandho dṛḍha-vrataḥ

śoṇitākhye pure ramye sa rājyam akarot purā

tasya śambhoḥ prasādena kiṅkarā iva te 'marāḥ

sahasra-bāhur vādyena tāṇḍave 'toṣayan mṛḍam

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Bāṇa was the oldest of the hundred sons fathered by the great saint Bali Mahārāja, who gave the whole earth in charity to Lord Hari when He appeared as Vāmanadeva. Bāṇāsura, born from Bali's semen, became a great devotee of Lord Śiva. His behavior was always respectable, and he was generous, intelligent, truthful and firm in his vows. The beautiful city of Śoṇitapura was under his dominion. Because Lord Śiva had favored him, the very demigods waited on Bāṇāsura like menial servants. Once, when Śiva was dancing his tāṇḍava-nṛtya, Bāṇa especially satisfied the lord by playing a musical accompaniment with his one thousand arms.

|| 10.62.3 ||

bhagavān sarva-bhūteśaḥ śaraṇyo bhakta-vatsalaḥ

vareṇa chandayām āsa sa taṁ vavre purādhipam

TRANSLATION

The lord and master of all created beings, the compassionate refuge of his devotees, gladdened Bāṇāsura by offering him the benediction of his choice. Bāṇa chose to have him, Lord Śiva, as the guardian of his city.

COMMENTARY

Bāṇāsura chose Śiva to be the protector of his city.

|| 10.62.4 ||

sa ekadāha giriśaṁ pārśva-sthaṁ vīrya-durmadaḥ

kirīṭenārka-varṇena saṁspṛśaṁs tat-padāmbujam

TRANSLATION

Bāṇāsura was intoxicated with his strength. One day, when Lord Śiva was standing beside him, Bāṇāsura touched the lord's lotus feet with his helmet, which shone like the sun, and spoke to him as follows.

|| 10.62.5 ||

namasye tvāṁ mahā-deva lokānāṁ gurum īśvaram

puṁsām apūrṇa-kāmānāṁ kāma-pūrāmarāṅghripam

TRANSLATION

[Bāṇāsura said:] O Lord Mahādeva, I bow down to you, the spiritual master and controller of the worlds. You are like the heavenly tree that fulfills the desires of those whose desires are unfulfilled.

COMMENTARY

Bāṇāsura said, "I offer respects to you who are just like a desire tree fulfilling all desires."

|| 10.62.6 ||

doḥ-sahasraṁ tvayā dattaṁ paraṁ bhārāya me 'bhavat

tri-lokyāṁ pratiyoddhāraṁ na labhe tvad ṛte samam

TRANSLATION

These one thousand arms you bestowed upon me have become merely a heavy burden. Besides you, I find no one in the three worlds worthy to fight.

COMMENTARY

Bāṇāsura said, "Since you can fulfill all desires, you should dissipate my sorrow. Except for you, there is no one suitable for me to fight with." The implied meaning is: "If you mercifully fight with me, then I will be freed of my sorrow from my unfulfilled urge to fight. Defeating you, I will become world famous as the conqueror of all directions."

|| 10.62.7 ||

kaṇḍūtyā nibhṛtair dorbhir yuyutsur dig-gajān aham

ādyāyāṁ cūrṇayann adrīn bhītās te 'pi pradudruvuḥ

TRANSLATION

Eager to fight with the elephants who rule the directions, O primeval lord, I went forth, pulverizing mountains with my arms, which were itching for battle. But even those great elephants fled in fear.

COMMENTARY

Bāṇāsura said, "With my arms intensely itching for battle, I became eager to fight against the elephants of the directions that hold up the bottom of the universe. O primeval one, I went out with the intention of conquering all the directions except the northeast where you reside. Seeing me pounding the mountains into powder in order to relieve the itching of my arms, the elephants of the directions became afraid. So tell me, unless I fight with you how can I relieve my itching? If it is not relieved, how can I remain peaceful? Therefore do not find fault with me."

|| 10.62.8 ||

tac chrutvā bhagavān kruddhaḥ ketus te bhajyate yadā

tvad-darpa-ghnaṁ bhaven mūḍha saṁyugaṁ mat-samena te

TRANSLATION

Hearing this, Lord Śiva became angry and replied, "Your flag will be broken, fool, when you have done battle with one who is my equal. That fight will vanquish your conceit."

COMMENTARY

The word *kruddhaḥ* (angry) implies that at first Śiva became angry on hearing those words and thought to kill Bāṇāsura. Then Lord Śiva reflected, "It would be improper to kill my servant with my own hands. But if this foolish, intoxicated person, who has received my mercy, thinks his mighty thousand arms to be a burden, then my master, who relieves the world of its burden, will indeed take away his burden."

Considering this, Śiva spoke angrily: “When your flag marked with a peacock is broken, you will fight with someone equal to (*samena*) me.” He states this to gratify Bāṇāsura. The real meaning however is: “You will fight a person with unlimited splendor.” (*samena:sa* means “with” and *ma* means “splendor”)

|| 10.62.9 ||

ity uktaḥ kumatir hṛṣṭaḥ sva-gṛhaṁ prāviśan nṛpa

pratīkṣan giriśādeśaṁ sva-vīrya-naśanam kudhīḥ

TRANSLATION

Thus advised, unintelligent Bāṇāsura was delighted. The fool then went home, O King, to wait for that which Lord Giriśa had predicted: the destruction of his prowess.

COMMENTARY

Śiva addressed Bāṇa as “O fool (*kumatiḥ*), your pride will be destroyed in battle.” At that time that fool fallaciously thought, “Of course, it is impossible that my pride can be destroyed in battle. But by Śiva’s statement I can deduce that someone who is most powerful is going to come and relieve my itching for battle.”

Thinking this, Bāṇāsura became delighted. While waiting for that breaking of his flag indicated by Lord Giriśa, by which his own prowess would be destroyed, Bāṇa thought, “When will my flag be broken?” Thus Bāṇa is *ku-dhī* (“having bad intelligence”) because he was eager without good reason.

|| 10.62.10 ||

tasyoṣā nāma duhitā svapne prādyumninā ratim

kanyālabhata kāntena prāg adṛṣṭa-śrutena sā

TRANSLATION

In a dream Bāṇa’s daughter, the maiden Ūṣā, had an amorous encounter with the son of Pradyumna, though she had never before seen or heard of her lover.

COMMENTARY

This verse describes the incidents leading up to the battle predicted by Śiva. The cause of Ūṣā's enjoyment with Aniruddha in her dream is explained in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*:

ūṣā bāṇa-sutā vipra pārvatīm śambhunā saha

krīḍantīm upalakṣyoccaiḥ spṛhāṁ cakre tad-āśrayām

"O *brāhmaṇa*, when Ūsā, the daughter of Bāṇa, happened to see Pārvatī playing with her husband, Lord Śambhu, Ūsā intensely desired to experience the same feelings."

tataḥ sakala-citta-jña gaurī tām aha bhāvinīm

alam atyartha-tāpena bhartrā tvam api raṁsyase

"At that time Goddess Gaurī [Pārvatī], who knows every-one's heart, told the sensitive young girl, 'Don't be so disturbed! You will have a chance to enjoy with your own husband.'"

ity uktā sā tadā cakre kadeti matim ātmanaḥ

ko vā bhartā mamety enāṁ punar apy āha pārvatī

"Hearing this, Ūsā thought to herself, 'But when? And who will my husband be?' In response, Pārvatī addressed her once more."

vaiśākha-śukla-dvādaśyāṁ svapne yo 'bhibhavaṁ tava

kariṣyati sa te bhartā rāja-putri bhaviṣyati

"O princess, the man who approaches you in your dream on the twelfth lunar day of the bright fortnight of the month Vaiśākha will become your husband."

|| 10.62.11 ||

sā tatra tam apaśyantī kvāsi kānteti vādinī

sakhīnāṁ madhya uttasthau vihvalā vrīḍitā bhṛśam

TRANSLATION

Losing sight of Him in her dream, Ūṣā suddenly sat up in the midst of her girlfriends, crying out "Where are You, my lover?" She was greatly disturbed and embarrassed.

|| 10.62.12 ||

bāṇasya mantrī kumbhāṇḍaś citralekhā ca tat-sutā

sakhy apṛcchat sakhīm ūṣāṁ kautūhala-samanvitā

TRANSLATION

Bāṇāsura had a minister named Kumbhāṇḍa, whose daughter was Citralekhā. A companion of Ūṣā's, she was filled with curiosity, and thus she inquired from her friend.

|| 10.62.13 ||

kaṁ tvaṁ mṛgayase su-bhru kīdṛśas te manorathaḥ

hasta-grāhaṁ na te 'dyāpi rāja-putry upalakṣaye

TRANSLATION

[Citralekhā said:] Who are you searching for, O fine-browed one? What is this hankering you're feeling? Until now, O princess, I haven't seen any man take your hand in marriage.

COMMENTARY

Citralekhā said, "I do not see your husband (*hasta grāhaṁ*) now, since you are not married."

|| 10.62.14 ||

dṛṣṭaḥ kaścin naraḥ svapne śyāmaḥ kamala-locanaḥ

pīta-vāsā bṛhad-bāhur yoṣitāṁ hṛdayaṁ-gamaḥ

TRANSLATION

[Ūṣā said:] In my dream I saw a certain man who had a darkblue complexion, lotus eyes, yellow garments and mighty arms. He was the kind who touches women's hearts.

|| 10.62.15 ||

tam ahaṁ mṛgaye kāntaṁ pāyayitvādharaṁ madhu

kvāpi yātaḥ spṛhayatīṁ kṣiptvā māṁ vṛjinārṇave

TRANSLATION

It is that lover I search for. After making me drink the honey of His lips, He has gone elsewhere, and thus He has thrown me, hankering fervently for Him, into the ocean of distress.

|| 10.62.16 ||

citralekho vāca

vyasanaṁ te 'pakarṣāmi tri-lokyāṁ yadi bhāvyate

tam āneṣye varaṁ yas te mano-hartā tam ādiśa

TRANSLATION

Citralekhā said: I will remove your distress. If He is to be found

anywhere in the three worlds, I will bring this future husband of yours who has stolen your heart. Please show me who He is.

COMMENTARY

Citralekhā said, "I will relieve your distress if he is to be found (*bhavyate*) in the three worlds."

|| 10.62.17 ||

ity uktvā deva-gandharva siddha-cāraṇa-pannagān

daitya-vidyādharān yakṣān manujāṁś ca yathālikhat

TRANSLATION

Saying this, Citralekhā proceeded to draw accurate pictures of various demigods, Gandharvas, Siddhas, Cāraṇas, Pannagas, Daityas, Vidyādharas, Yakṣas and humans.

|| 10.62.18-19 ||

manujeṣu ca sā vṛṣnīn śūram ānakadundubhim

vyalikhad rāma-kṛṣṇau ca pradyumnaṁ vīkṣya lajjitā

aniruddhaṁ vilikhitaṁ vīkṣyoṣāvāṅ-mukhī hriyā

so ʻsāv asāv iti prāha smayamānā mahī-pate

TRANSLATION

O King, among the humans, Citralekhā drew pictures of the Vṛṣṇis, including Śūrasena, Ānakadundubhi, Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa. When Ūṣā saw the picture of Pradyumna she became bashful, and when she saw Aniruddha's picture she bent her head down in embarrassment. Smiling, she exclaimed, "He's the one! It's Him!"

COMMENTARY

Citralekhā asked, "Who among these men is yours?"

Seeing the picture of Pradyumna, Ūṣā became embarrassed, understanding that he was her father-in-law. When she saw the picture of his son Aniruddha, her lover, she said twice, "This is him, this is him!" Her repeating these words is due to the manifestation of extreme surprise and joy in her heart. It is understood that Ūṣā then wrote the words "Aniruddha, the son of Pradyumna" above the picture.

|| 10.6.20 ||

citralekhā tam ājñāya pautraṁ kṛṣṇasya yoginī

yayau vihāyasā rājan dvārakāṁ kṛṣṇa-pālitām

TRANSLATION

Citralekhā, endowed with mystic powers, recognized Him as Kṛṣṇa's grandson [Aniruddha]. My dear King, she then traveled by the mystic skyway to Dvārakā, the city under Lord Kṛṣṇa's protection.

|| 10.62.21 ||

tatra suptaṁ su-paryaṅke prādyumniṁ yogam āsthitā

gṛhītvā śoṇita-puraṁ sakhyai priyam adarśayat

TRANSLATION

There she found Pradyumna's son Aniruddha sleeping upon a fine bed. With her yogic power she took Him away to Śoṇitapura, where she presented her girlfriend Ūṣā with her beloved.

COMMENTARY

When Citralekhā found it impossible to enter Dvārakā, Nārada Muni instructed her in the mystic art (*yogam āsthitā*) of entering Kṛṣṇa's city. Some authorities also say that Citralekhā is herself an expansion of Yogamāyā. Citralekhā returned to Śoṇitapura and presented Aniruddha to Ūṣā.

|| 10.62.22 ||

sā ca taṁ sundara-varaṁ vilokya muditānanā

duṣprekṣye sva-gṛhe pumbhī reme prādyumninā samam

TRANSLATION

When Ūṣā beheld Him, the most beautiful of men, her face lit up with joy. She took the son of Pradyumna to her private quarters, which men were forbidden even to see, and there enjoyed with Him.

COMMENTARY

The phrase "forbidden even to see" (*duṣprekṣye*) actually means that Ūṣā's quarters were "impossible for other men to enter."

|| 10.62.23-24 ||

parārdhya-vāsaḥ-srag-gandha-dhūpa-dīpāsanādibhiḥ

pāna-bhojana-bhakṣyaiś ca vākyaiḥ śuśrūṣaṇārcitaḥ

gūḍhaḥ kanyā-pure śaśvat-pravṛddha-snehayā tayā

nāhar-gaṇān sa bubudhe ūṣayāpahṛtendriyaḥ

TRANSLATION

Ūṣā worshiped Aniruddha with faithful service, offering Him priceless garments, along with garlands, fragrances, incense, lamps, sitting places and so on. She also offered Him beverages, all types of food, and sweet words. As He thus remained hidden in the young ladies' quarters, Aniruddha did not notice the passing of the days, for His senses were captivated by Ūṣā, whose affection for Him ever increased.

COMMENTARY

Ūṣā honored Aniruddha with various services described in this verse.

|| 10.62.25-26 ||

tāṁ tathā yadu-vīreṇa bhujyamānāṁ hata-vratām

hetubhir lakṣayāṁ cakrur āpṛītāṁ duravacchadaiḥ

bhaṭā āvedayāṁ cakrū rājaṁs te duhitur vayam

viceṣṭitaṁ lakṣayāma kanyāyāḥ kula-dūṣaṇam

TRANSLATION

The female guards eventually noticed unmistakable symptoms of romantic involvement in Ūṣā, who, having broken her maiden vow, was being enjoyed by the Yadu hero and showing signs of conjugal happiness. The guards went to Bāṇāsura and told him, "O King, we have detected in your daughter the kind of improper behavior that spoils the reputation of a young girl's family."

COMMENTARY

Seeing the signs of sexual activity (*hetubhiḥ*), which were impossible to disguise (*duravacchadaiḥ*), the chief of which was her great joy fulness (*āpṛītāṁ*), the female guards (*bhaṭā*) reported to Bāṇāsura. The guards feared that if Bāṇāsura found out about Usa's activities from some other source, he would severely punish them, and thus they personally informed him that his young daughter was no longer innocent.

|| 10.62.27 ||

anapāyibhir asmābhir guptāyāś ca gṛhe prabho

kanyāyā dūṣaṇaṁ pumbhir duṣprekṣyāyā na vidmahe

TRANSLATION

"We have been carefully watching over her, never leaving our posts, O master, so we cannot understand how this maiden, whom no man can even see, has been corrupted within the palace."

COMMENTARY

The word *anapāyibhiḥ* can mean either "never leaving our posts" or "never deluded."

|| 10.62.28 ||

tataḥ pravyathito bāṇo duhituḥ śruta-dūṣaṇaḥ

tvaritaḥ kanyakāgāraṁ prāpto 'drākṣīd yadūdvaham

TRANSLATION

Very agitated to hear of his daughter's corruption, Bāṇāsura rushed at once to the maidens' quarters. There he saw the pride of the Yadus, Aniruddha.

|| 10.62.29-30 ||

kāmātmajaṁ taṁ bhuvanaika-sundaraṁ

śyāmaṁ piśaṅgāmbaram ambujekṣaṇam

bṛhad-bhujaṁ kuṇḍala-kuntala-tviṣā

smitāvalokena ca maṇḍitānanam

dīvyantam akṣaiḥ priyayābhinṛmṇayā

tad-aṅga-saṅga-stana-kuṅkuma-srajam

bāhvor dadhānaṁ madhu-mallikāśritāṁ

tasyāgra āsīnam avekṣya vismitaḥ

TRANSLATION

Bāṇāsura saw before him Cupid's own son, possessed of unrivaled beauty, with dark-blue complexion, yellow garments, lotus eyes and formidable arms. His face was adorned with effulgent earrings and hair, and also with smiling glances. As He sat opposite His most auspicious lover, playing with her at dice, there hung between His arms a garland of spring jasmines that had been smeared with kuṅkuma powder from her breasts when He had embraced her. Bāṇāsura was astonished to see all this.

COMMENTARY

The word *abhinṛmṇayā* means with Ūṣā who was "all-auspicious." Bāṇāsura was amazed, thinking, "Ah, how audaciously this very bold one acts with her!"

|| 10.62.31 ||

sa taṁ praviṣṭaṁ vṛtam ātatāyibhir

bhaṭair anīkair avalokya mādhavaḥ

udyamya maurvaṁ parighaṁ vyavasthito

yathāntako daṇḍa-dharo jighāṁsayā

TRANSLATION

Seeing Bāṇāsura enter with many armed guards, Aniruddha raised His iron club and stood resolute, ready to strike anyone who attacked Him. He resembled death personified holding his rod of punishment.

COMMENTARY

Aniruddha (*mādhva*) raised his club made of a special kind of iron called *muru* (*maurvaṁ*).

|| 10.62.32 ||

jighṛkṣayā tān paritaḥ prasarpataḥ śuno yathā śūkara-yūthapo ’hanat

te hanyamānā bhavanād vinirgatā nirbhinna-mūrdhoru-bhujāḥ pradudruvuḥ

TRANSLATION

As the guards converged on Him from all sides, trying to capture Him, Aniruddha struck them just as the leader of a pack of boars strikes back at dogs. Hit by His blows, the guards fled the palace, running for their lives with shattered heads, thighs and arms.

|| 10.62.33 ||

taṁ nāga-pāśair bali-nandano balī ghnantaṁ sva-sainyaṁ kupito babandha ha

ūṣā bhṛśaṁ śoka-viṣāda-vihvalā baddhaṁ niśamyāśru-kalākṣy arautsīt

TRANSLATION

But even as Aniruddha was striking down the army of Bāṇa, that powerful son of Bali angrily caught Him with the mystic nāga-pāśa ropes. When Ūṣā heard of Aniruddha’s capture, she was overwhelmed with grief and depression; her eyes filled with tears, and she wept.

COMMENTARY

Ūṣā cried (*arautsīt*) torrents of tears. Bāṇāsura was able to capture Aniruddha, the Supersoul of all living entities, whose expansion is the Lord of Śvetadvīpa, only by the influence of Kṛṣṇa’s līlā-śakti.

Thus ends the commentary on the Sixty-second Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Sixty-three

Lord Kṛṣṇa Fights with Bāṇāsura

|| 10.63.1 ||

śṛī-śuka uvāca

apaśyatāṁ cāniruddhaṁ tad-bandhūnāṁ ca bhārata

catvāro vārṣikā māsā vyatīyur anuśocatām

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O descendant of Bharata, the relatives of Aniruddha, not seeing Him return, continued to lament as the four rainy months passed.

COMMENTARY

In this chapter, Kṛṣṇa is praised by Jvara and Rudra after defeating them. Kṛṣṇa then cuts off the arms of Bāṇāsura and returns to Dvārakā with Aniruddha. Starting from the month of Jyeṣṭha, Aniruddha disappeared for six months. Even after the four months of the monsoon season had passed, he still had not returned.

|| 10.63.2 ||

nāradāt tad upākarṇya vārtāṁ baddhasya karma ca

prayayuḥ śoṇita-puraṁ vṛṣṇayaḥ kṛṣṇa-daivatāḥ

TRANSLATION

After hearing from Nārada the news of Aniruddha's deeds and His capture, the Vṛṣṇis, who worshiped Lord Kṛṣṇa as their personal Deity, went to Śoṇitapura.

COMMENTARY

Hearing news of Aniruddha and his activities, the Vṛṣṇis went to Śoṇitapura.

|| 10.63.3-4 ||

pradyumno yuyudhānaś ca gadaḥ sāmbo 'tha sāraṇaḥ

nandopananda-bhadrādyā rāma-kṛṣṇānuvartinaḥ

akṣauhiṇībhir dvādaśabhiḥ sametāḥ sarvato diśam

rurudhur bāṇa-nagaraṁ samantāt sātvatarṣabhāḥ

TRANSLATION

With Lord Balarāma and Lord Kṛṣṇa in the lead, the chiefs of the Sātvata clan—Pradyumna, Sātyaki, Gada, Sāmba, Sāraṇa, Nanda, Upananda, Bhadra and others—converged with an army of twelve divisions and laid siege to Bāṇasura's capital, completely surrounding the city on all sides.

|| 10.63.5 ||

bhajyamāna-purodyāna- prākārāṭṭāla-gopuram

prekṣamāṇo ruṣāviṣṭas tulya-sainyo 'bhiniryayau

TRANSLATION

Bāṇāsura became filled with anger upon seeing them destroy his city's suburban gardens, ramparts, watchtowers and gateways, and thus he went out to confront them with an army of equal size.

|| 10.63.6 ||

bāṇārthe bhagavān rudraḥ sa-sutaḥ pramathair vṛtaḥ

āruhya nandi-vṛṣabhaṁ yuyudhe rāma-kṛṣṇayoḥ

TRANSLATION

Lord Rudra, accompanied by his son Kārtikeya and the Pramathas, came riding on Nandi, his bull carrier, to fight Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa on Bāṇa's behalf.

COMMENTARY

Rudra fought on behalf (*bāṇa-arthe*) of Bāṇāsura just to show Bāṇāsura his faults by making him experience suffering. Śiva is addressed as *bhagavān* to indicate that by nature he is all-knowing and thus well aware of Kṛṣṇa's greatness. Still, although Śiva knew Kṛṣṇa would defeat him, he joined the battle against Him to demonstrate the glories of Kṛṣṇa. This is the opinion of ancient authorities.

Śiva entered the battle for two reasons: first, to increase Kṛṣṇa's pleasure and enthusiasm; and second, to demonstrate that Kṛṣṇa, although enacting humanlike pastimes, is superior to other *avatāras*, such as Lord Rāma. Kṛṣṇa's internal potency, *yogamāyā*, bewildered Lord Śiva just as she had bewildered Brahmā. This is confirmed in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu: brahma-rudrādi-mohanam.*

|| 10.63.7 ||

āsīt su-tumulaṁ yuddham adbhutaṁ roma-harṣaṇam

kṛṣṇa-śaṅkarayo rājan pradyumna-guhayor api

TRANSLATION

A most astonishing, tumultuous and hair-raising battle then commenced, with Lord Kṛṣṇa matched against Lord Śaṅkara, and Pradyumna against Kārtikeya.

|| 10.63.8 ||

kumbhāṇḍa-kūpakarṇābhyāṁ balena saha saṁyugaḥ

sāmbasya bāṇa-putreṇa bāṇena saha sātyakeḥ

TRANSLATION

Lord Balarāma fought with Kumbhāṇḍa and Kūpakarṇa, Sāmba with Bāṇa's son, and Sātyaki with Bāṇa.

|| 10.63.9 ||

brahmādayaḥ surādhīśā munayaḥ siddha-cāraṇāḥ

gandharvāpsaraso yakṣā vimānair draṣṭum āgaman

TRANSLATION

Brahmā and the other ruling demigods, along with Siddhas, Cāraṇas and great sages, as well as Gandharvas, Apsarās and Yakṣas, all came in their celestial airplanes to watch.

|| 10.63.10-11 ||

śaṅkarānucarān śaurir bhūta-pramatha-guhyakān

ḍākinīr yātudhānāṁś ca vetālān sa-vināyakān

preta-mātṛ-piśācāṁś ca kuṣmāṇḍān brahma-rākṣasān

drāvayām āsa tīkṣṇāgraiḥ śaraiḥ śārṅga-dhanuś-cyutaiḥ

TRANSLATION

With sharp-pointed arrows discharged from His bow Śārṅga, Lord Kṛṣṇa drove away the various followers of Lord Śiva—Bhūtas, Pramathas, Guhyakas, Ḍākinīs, Yātudhānas, Vetālas, Vināyakas, Pretas, Mātās, Piśācas, Kuṣmāṇḍas and Brahma-rākṣasas.

|| 10.63.12 ||

pṛthag-vidhāni prāyuṅkta piṇāky astrāṇi śārṅgiṇe

praty-astraiḥ śamayām āsa śārṅga-pāṇir avismitaḥ

TRANSLATION

Lord Śiva, wielder of the trident, shot various weapons at Lord Kṛṣṇa, wielder of Śārṅga. But Lord Kṛṣṇa was not in the least perplexed: He neutralized all these weapons with appropriate counterweapons.

|| 10.63.13 ||

brahmāstrasya ca brahmāstraṁ vāyavyasya ca pārvatam

āgneyasya ca pārjanyaṁ naijaṁ pāśupatasya ca

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa counteracted a brahmāstra with another brahmāstra, a wind weapon with a mountain weapon, a fire weapon with a rain weapon, and Lord Śiva's personal pāśupatāstra weapon with His own personal weapon, the nārāyaṇāstra.

COMMENTARY

The counteracting of Śiva's weapons is described in this verse. One brahmāstra was countered with another brahmāstra. The verb "released" is understood from the previous verse. Kṛṣṇa countered the pāśupatāstra weapon with His own weapon (*naijaṁ*), the *nārāyaṇāstra*.

|| 10.63.14 ||

mohayitvā tu giriśaṁ jṛmbhaṇāstreṇa jṛmbhitam

bāṇasya pṛtanāṁ śaurir jaghānāsi-gadeṣubhiḥ

TRANSLATION

After bewildering Lord Śiva by making him yawn with a yawning weapon, Lord Kṛṣṇa proceeded to strike down Bāṇāsura's army with His sword, club and arrows.

|| 10.63.15 ||

skandaḥ pradyumna-bāṇaughair ardyamānaḥ samantataḥ

asṛg vimuñcan gātrebhyaḥ śikhināpakramad raṇāt

TRANSLATION

Lord Kārtikeya was distressed by the flood of Pradyumna's arrows raining down from all sides, and thus he fled the battlefield on his peacock as blood poured from his limbs.

COMMENTARY

Kārtikeya (Skanda) left the battlefield on his peacock carrier (*śikhinā:māyūreṇa saha*).

|| 10.63.16 ||

kumbhāṇḍa-kūpakarṇaś ca petatur muṣalārditau

dudruvus tad-anīkani hata-nāthāni sarvataḥ

TRANSLATION

Kumbhāṇḍa and Kūpakarṇa, tormented by Lord Balarāma's club, fell down dead. When the soldiers of these two demons saw that their leaders had been killed, they scattered in all directions.

|| 10.63.17 ||

viśīryamāṇam sva-balaṁ dṛṣṭvā bāṇo 'ty-amarṣitaḥ

kṛṣṇam abhyadravat saṅkhye rathī hitvaiva sātyakim

TRANSLATION

Bāṇāsura was furious to see his entire military force being torn apart. Leaving his fight with Sātyaki, he charged across the battlefield on his chariot and attacked Lord Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.63.18 ||

dhanūṁṣy ākṛṣya yugapad bāṇaḥ pañca-śatāni vai

ekaikasmin śarau dvau dvau sandadhe raṇa-durmadaḥ

TRANSLATION

Excited to a frenzy by the fighting, Bāṇa simultaneously pulled taut all the strings of his five hundred bows and fixed two arrows on each string.

|| 10.63.19 ||

tāni ciccheda bhagavān dhanūṁsi yugapad dhariḥ

sārathiṁ ratham aśvāṁś ca hatvā śaṅkham apūrayat

TRANSLATION

Lord Śrī Hari split every one of Bāṇāsura's bows simultaneously, and also struck down his chariot driver, chariot and horses. The Lord then sounded His conchshell.

|| 10.63.20 ||

tan-mātā koṭarā nāma nagnā makta-śiroruhā

puro 'vatasthe kṛṣṇasya putra-prāṇa-rirakṣayā

TRANSLATION

Just then Bāṇāsura's mother, Koṭarā, desiring to save her son's life, appeared before Lord Kṛṣṇa naked and with her hair undone.

COMMENTARY

Bāṇa's mother, Koṭarā, sometimes called Koṭarī, is a form of Pārvatī worshiped by the demons. She appeared naked before Kṛṣṇa with a desire to save her son (*rirakṣayā*).

|| 10.63.21 ||

tatas tiryaṅ-mukho nagnām anirīkṣan gadāgrajaḥ

bāṇaś ca tāvad virathaś chinna-dhanvāviśat puram

TRANSLATION

Lord Gadāgraja turned His face away to avoid seeing the naked woman, and Bāṇāsura—deprived of his chariot, his bow shattered—took the opportunity to flee into his city.

COMMENTARY

Bāṇa fled into his city while Kṛṣṇa was turning His face away to avoid seeing a naked woman.

|| 10.63.22 ||

vidrāvite bhūta-gaṇe jvaras tu trī-śirās trī-pāt

abhyadhāvata dāśārhaṁ dahann iva diśo daśa

TRANSLATION

After Lord Śiva's followers had been driven away, the Śiva-jvara, who had three heads and three feet, pressed forward to attack Lord Kṛṣṇa. As the Śiva-jvara approached, he seemed to burn everything in the ten directions.

COMMENTARY

Śiva-jvara ran towards Kṛṣṇa to fight. The form of Śiva-jvara is described in the following verse: *jvaras tri-padas tri-śirāḥ ṣaḍ-bhujo nava-locanaḥ bhasma-praharaṇo raudraḥ kālāntaka-yamopamaḥ*, "The terrible Śiva-jvara had three legs, three heads, six arms and nine eyes. Showering ashes, he resembled Yamarāja at the time of universal annihilation."

|| 10.63.23 ||

atha nārāyaṇaḥ devaḥ taṁ dṛṣṭvā vyasṛjaj jvaram

māheśvaro vaiṣṇavaś ca yuyudhāte jvarāv ubhau

TRANSLATION

Seeing this personified weapon approach, Lord Nārāyaṇa then released His own personified fever weapon, the Viṣṇu-jvara. The Śiva-jvara and Viṣṇu-jvara thus battled each other.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa sent forth the cold fever weapon.

|| 10.63.24 ||

māheśvaraḥ samākrandan vaiṣṇavena balārditaḥ

alabdhvābhayam anyatra bhīto māheśvaro jvaraḥ

śaraṇārthī hṛṣīkeśaṁ tuṣṭāva prayatāñjaliḥ

TRANSLATION

The Śiva-jvara, overwhelmed by the strength of the Viṣṇu-jvara, cried out in pain. But finding no refuge, the frightened Śiva-jvara approached Lord Kṛṣṇa, the master of the senses, hoping to attain His shelter. Thus with joined palms he began to praise the Lord.

COMMENTARY

The Śiva-jvara (fever weapon) cried out (*samākrandan*) in pain. He could not find relief even after going to his own master Śiva. Then he left Lord Śiva's side and directly took shelter of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Greatly frightened (*bhīta*), Śiva-jvara fell to the ground to offer his respects to Kṛṣṇa, and folding his hands praised the Lord with devotion.

|| 10.63.25 ||

namāmi tvānanta-śaktiṁ pareśam sarvātmānaṁ kevalaṁ jñapti-mātram

viśvotpatti-sthāna-saṁrodha-hetuṁ yat tad brahma brahma-liṅgam praśāntam

TRANSLATION

The Śiva-jvara said: I bow down to You of unlimited potencies, the Supreme Lord, the Supersoul of all beings. You possess pure and complete consciousness and are the cause of cosmic creation, maintenance and dissolution. Perfectly peaceful, You are the Absolute Truth to whom the Vedas indirectly refer.

COMMENTARY

Śiva-jvara said, "You have unlimited powers (*ananta-śakti*). I have understood that Your powers are greater than even those of Śiva, my master."

Śiva-jvara then explains how this is true: "Śiva is a controller, but You are the supreme controller (*pareśa*). You are the Supersoul of every living entity (*sarvātmānam*) including Lord Śiva. You are composed of pure spiritual consciousness (*kevalaṁ jñapti-mātram*) without any mixture of material *māyā*, but my master Śiva is mixed with *māyā*. You are

the creator, maintainer and destroyer (*viśvotpatti-sthāna saṁrodha-hetuṁ*), whereas my master Śiva is only the destroyer. You are indicated by the Vedas and thus You are called brahmā liṅgam, whereas Śiva is represented merely the sounds such as dentals and gutturals. You are the perfectly peaceful Brahman (*praśāntam brahman*), whereas Śiva is the ferocious Brahman (*ugra-brahma*)."

|| 10.63.26 ||

kālo daivaṁ karma jīvaḥ svabhāvo dravyaṁ kṣetraṁ prāṇa ātmā vikāraḥ

tat-saṅghāto bīja-roha-pravāhas tvan-māyaiṣā tan-niṣedhaṁ prapadye

TRANSLATION

Time; fate; karma; the jīva and his propensities; the subtle material elements; the material body; the life air; false ego; the various senses; and the totality of these as reflected in the living being's subtle body—all this constitutes your material illusory energy, māyā, an endless cycle like that of seed and plant. I take shelter of You, the negation of this māyā.

COMMENTARY

Śiva-jvara elaborated on Kṛṣṇa being pure, concentrated spiritual consciousness (*sarvātmānam kevalaṁ jñapti-mātram*). First the objects excluded by the word "only" (*kevalaṁ*) are enumerated. Time (*kāla*) is the agitator. Action (*karma*) is the immediate subtle cause, and that which brings about the visible results is called destiny (*daiva*). Propensities (*svabhāva*) are the subtle traces (*samskāra*) of *karma*, which one carry from one body to the next. The *jīva* is the individual living entity who possesses this *karma*. *Dravyaṁ* refers to the subtle forms of the elements (*bhūta-sūkṣmas:tan-mātras*). *Kṣetram* is the body or matter (*prakrti*). *Prāṇa* is the life air (*sūtra*), *ātmā* is the false ego (*ahaṅkāra*), and *vikāraḥ* (transformation) is sixteen-fold, comprising the eleven senses and the five gross elements (*pañca mahā-bhutas*). The totality of these is reflected in the living being's subtle body (*liṇga-deha*).

"Action generated from the body (*bīja*) produces another body (*roha*). This continuous flow (*pravāha*) is Your *māyā*. Though the living entity is different from *māyā*, because of being controlled by *māyā*, he is enamored by it. In summary, the phrase *bīja-roha-pravāha* means that the conditioned soul accepts a material body in order to enjoy the material world. The body is the seed (*bīja*) of his future material existence, because when a person acts with the body he creates further reactions (*karma*) which grow (*roha*) into the obligation to accept another material body. In other words, material life is a chain of actions and reactions. Therefore, I take shelter of You, the limit of negation.

Your body and senses (*tan-niṣedham*) are non-different from Your pure spiritual existence and are not *māyā*."

|| 10.63.27 ||

nānā-bhāvair līlayaivopapannair devān sādhūn loka-setūn bibharṣi

haṁsy unmārgān hiṁsayā vartamānān janmaitat te bhāra-hārāya bhūmeḥ

TRANSLATION

With various intentions, You perform pastimes to maintain the demigods, the saintly persons and the codes of religion for this world. By these pastimes You also kill those who stray from the right path and live by violence. Indeed, your present incarnation is meant to relieve the earth's burden.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa may object, "But if I am like this, then why is there seen in Me the material qualities of attachment and hatred revealed by My showing favor?"

Śiva-jvara responds, "You desire, 'Let Me protect the devotees who are favorable to Me and kill the demons who are inimical to My devotees.' You accept such intentions out of affection for Your devotees. In Your pastimes, You protect the demigods such as Indra, the devotees and saintly persons, who act as the shelter for the people of the world (*loka setūn: lokāśraya-bhūtān*), and You destroy those who transgress the path of religion. Therefore, Your liking and disliking, being aspects of Your quality of affection for Your devotees, are not products of *māyā*. Thus I have understood that You have appeared to relieve the burden of the earth, who is Your exalted devotee."

|| 10.63.28 ||

tapto 'ham te tejasā duḥsahena śāntogreṇāty-ulbaṇena jvareṇa

tāvat tāpo dehināṁ te 'nghri-mūlaṁ no severan yāvad āśānubaddhāḥ

TRANSLATION

I am tortured by the fierce power of Your terrible fever weapon, which is cold yet burning. All embodied souls must suffer as long as they remain bound to material ambitions and thus averse to serving Your feet.

COMMENTARY

Śiva-jvara said, “I cannot praise You any longer because the weapon sent by You is tormenting me with both cold and burning.”

Someone may say, ‘It is fitting that you suffer since you cause suffering to others.’ He answers, “Those who do not surrender to Your feet deserve to suffer. But now I have become Your devotee.”

|| 10.63.29 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

tri-śiras te prasanno ’smi vyetu te maj-jvarād bhayam

yo nau smarati saṁvādaṁ tasya tvan na bhaved bhayam

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord said: O three-headed one, I am pleased with you. May your fear of My fever weapon be dispelled, and may whoever remembers our conversation here have no reason to fear you.

COMMENTARY

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said, “He who remembers this conversation between you and Me will no fear of you.” Kṛṣṇa says this rather than ordering Śiva-jvara, ‘Do not give him fever at all.’ Thus the statement means “Even when sometimes fever may come to one who has heard this conversation, still it will not create fear in him. It will be insignificant for him.”

|| 10.63.30 ||

ity ukto ’cyutam ānamya gato māheśvaro jvaraḥ

bāṇas tu ratham ārūḍhaḥ prāgād yotsyan janārdanam

TRANSLATION

Thus addressed, the Māheśvara-jvara bowed down to the infallible Lord and went away. But Bāṇāsura then appeared, riding forth on his chariot to fight Lord Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

Bāṇa, who was intending to fight (*yotsyan*), then mounted his chariot and approached Janārdana.

|| 10.63.31 ||

ity ukto 'cyutam ānamya gato māheśvaro jvaraḥ

bāṇas tu ratham ārūḍhaḥ prāgād yotsyan janārdanam

TRANSLATION

Thus addressed, the Māheśvara-jvara bowed down to the infallible Lord and went away. But Bāṇāsura then appeared, riding forth on his chariot to fight Lord Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.63.32 ||

tasyāsyato 'strāṇy asakṛc cakreṇa kṣura-neminā

ciccheda bhagavān bāhūn śākhā iva vanaspateḥ

TRANSLATION

As Bāṇa continued hurling weapons at Him, the Supreme Lord began using His razor-sharp cakra to cut off Bāṇāsura's arms as if they were tree branches.

COMMENTARY

As Bāṇa (*tasya*) was throwing weapons (*asyataḥ*), Kṛṣṇa cut off his arms.

|| 10.63.33 ||

bāhuṣu chidyamāneṣu bāṇasya bhagavān bhavaḥ

bhaktānakampy upavrajya cakrāyudham abhāṣata

TRANSLATION

Lord Śiva felt compassion for his devotee Bāṇāsura, whose arms were being cut off, and thus he approached Lord Cakrāyudha [Kṛṣṇa] and spoke to Him as follows.

COMMENTARY

But, it may be questioned should not Śiva be ashamed to come forward and praise that person with whom he had fought? No, because Śiva is *bhagavān*, omniscient. He knew that it was not at all astonishing to be bewildered by the *māyā* of Kṛṣṇa who was superior to himself as well as Brahmā and all others. Therefore why should he be embarrassed in front of his Lord, the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself?

|| 10.63.34 ||

śrī-rudra uvāca

tvaṁ hi brahma paraṁ jyotir gūḍhaṁ brahmaṇi vāṅ-maye

yaṁ paśyanty amalātmāna ākāśam iva kevalam

TRANSLATION

Śrī Rudra said: You alone are the Absolute Truth, the supreme light, the mystery hidden within the verbal manifestation of the Absolute. Those whose hearts are spotless can see You, for You are uncontaminated, like the sky.

COMMENTARY

Lord Śiva prayed, "You are the Supreme Brahman (*para brahman*), the original transcendental form of spiritual light." This is confirmed in *Śri Hari-vaṁśa* wherein Kṛṣṇa instructs Arjuna:

tat-paraṁ paramaṁ brahma sarvaṁ vibhajate jagat

mamaiva tad ghanaṁ tejo jñātum arhasi bhārata

> “Superior to the total material nature is the Supreme Brahman, from which this entire creation expands. O descendant of Bharata, you should know that the Supreme Brahman consists of My concentrated effulgence.”

Anticipating that Kṛṣṇa may ask “If you know that I am the Supreme Brahman then why did you fight with Me?” Śiva replied, “This Brahman is disguised even in the sound manifestation of Brahman, the *Vedas* (*brahmaṇi vāṅ-maye*). So how can You be directly recognized as Brahman itself?”

Kṛṣṇa replied, “Then can no one know Me?”

Śiva answered, “Only pure souls free from the contamination of *māyā* can see You. Therefore, how can I, who am filled with ignorance, see You, who are just like the sky that contains the ether. Though You are the shelter of *māyā*, You are not tainted by *māyā*.”

|| 10.63.35-36 ||

nābhir nabho ’gnir mukham ambu reto dyauḥ śīrṣam āśāḥ śrutir aṅghrir urvī

candro mano yasya dṛg arka ātmā ahaṁ samudro jaṭharaṁ bhujendraḥ

romāṇi yasyauṣadhayo ’mbu-vāhāḥ keśā viriñco dhiṣaṇā visargaḥ

prajā-patir hṛdayaṁ yasya dharmaḥ sa vai bhavān puruṣo loka-kalpaḥ

TRANSLATION

The sky is Your navel, fire Your face, water Your semen, and heaven Your head. The cardinal directions are Your sense of hearing, herbal plants the hairs on Your body, and water-bearing clouds the hair on Your head. The earth is Your foot, the moon Your mind, and the sun Your vision, while I am Your ego. The ocean is Your abdomen, Indra Your arm, Lord Brahmā Your intelligence, the progenitor of mankind Your genitals, and religion Your heart. You are indeed the original puruṣa, creator of the worlds.

COMMENTARY

In these verses Lord Śiva explains, “You are directly the Supreme Absolute, while this whole world, including myself and everything else is Your expansion.”

Lord Śiva said, “Your navel is the sky; earth is Your foot and the sun is Your eyes. I, Śiva, am Your ego (*ātmā:ahaṇkāraḥ*). Indra is Your arms and the herbs are Your bodily hairs. Brahmā is Your intellect (*dhiṣaṇā*), Prajāpati Dakṣa is Your genital (*visarga*), and religion (*dharma*) is Your heart.”

The repetition of the word yasya (*yasyauṣadhayo*) is to make it clear that they all belong to Kṛṣṇa.

“All these visible manifestations are opulent expansions (*vibhūtis*) of You, whose body is eternal, fully conscious and perfectly blissful. You create the worlds (*loka kalpaḥ*) in the sense that You create the material elements like fire from Your own transcendental navel, face and other bodily parts.”

|| 10.63.37 ||

tavāvatāro ’yam akuṇṭha-dhāman dharmasya guptyai jagato hitāya

vayaṁ ca sarve bhavatānubhāvitā vibhāvayāmo bhuvanāni sapta

TRANSLATION

Your current descent into the material realm, O Lord of unrestricted power, is meant for upholding the principles of justice and benefiting the entire universe. We demigods, each depending on Your grace and authority, develop the seven planetary systems.

COMMENTARY

Lord Śiva said, “Though You are not visible because You are directly the Supreme Absolute Truth, still You become visible to the people of the material world due to the supreme mercy arising from Your inconceivable energy.” This is the intent of this verse.

Śiva continued, “Though You are the Supreme Brahman, You reveal Yourslef to us because it is impossible to grasp Your powers by logical arguments (*akuṇṭha-dhāman:kuṇṭhī-kartum*). You appear in this world to protect *dharma* in the form of devotion to You, to des-troy opposing philosophies, and to liberate even such materialists as the *karmīs, jñānīs* and sinners. You appear not just for the ordinary

protection of the universe. This is being done by the ten rulers of the directions (*vayaṁ*), who are authorized by You to protect the seven worlds. So what need is there for You to appear in this world for this purpose?"

|| 10.63.38 ||

tvam eka ādyaḥ puruṣo 'dvitīyas turyaḥ sva-dṛg dhetur ahetur īśaḥ

pratīyase 'thāpi yathā-vikāraṁ sva-māyayā sarva-guṇa-prasiddhyai

TRANSLATION

You are the original person, one without a second, transcendental and self-manifesting. Uncaused, you are the cause of all, and You are the ultimate controller. You are nonetheless perceived in terms of the transformations of matter effected by Your illusory energy—transformations You sanction so that the various material qualities can fully manifest.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa replied, "Since you are all My expansions (*vibhūtis*), then you are non-different from Me."

In this verse Śiva answers, "No no! You are one (*tvam ekaḥ*) devoid of distinctions of similarity, since there is no other supreme controller than You. Even among the incarnations of Matsya and others, who are identical with You, You are the origin although appearing in a human-like form (*puruṣo*). Though You are different from the *jīva-śakti* and *māyā-śakti*, You are also without difference (*advitīyaḥ*) since everything comes from You. There are four chief forms of Godhead (*catur-vyūha*) arising from Your *svarūpa*. Among these four, You are the fourth member of the quadruple expansion (*turīya*) known as Vāsudeva."

Kṛṣṇa said, "But no one else is capable of seeing Me."

Śiva replied, "You are visible only to Yourself (*svadṛk*). Because You are the greatest of all, You are the cause (hetu) of everything and yet You are without cause (*hetu*). Therefore You are the supreme controller (*īśa*) since all the chief powers are Yours. Though You are full of such powers, still You assist the insignificant material modes as follows. According to the transformations within every material body, You manifest

Yourself by the agency of Your *māyā* for the successful functioning of the intelligence, mind and senses (*sarva-guṇa-prasiddhyai*). You are perceived as the Supersoul in all things. If You did not accept the role of Supersoul within all of them, then there could be no manifestation of the material modes, and thus they would be without any purpose."

|| 10.63.39 ||

yathaiva sūryaḥ pihitaś chāyayā svayā chāyāṁ ca rūpāṇi ca sañcakāsti

evaṁ guṇenāpihito guṇāṁs tvam ātma-pradīpo guṇinaś ca bhūman

TRANSLATION

O almighty one, just as the sun, though hidden by a cloud, illuminates the cloud and all other visible forms as well, so You, although hidden by the material qualities, remain self-luminous and thus reveal all those qualities, along with the living entities who possess them.

COMMENTARY

An example is given to show how, though the Lord is invisible as Paramātmā, He is revealed through the qualities of *māyā*. Śiva said, "From the observer's point of view the sun appears to be covered by the clouds, yet it is the sun that allows us to see the clouds and all other things as well. Though the observing living entity is covered by the false ego (*guṇena*), which is produced by You as the Supersoul, You reveal (*pradīpaḥ*) the intelligence, senses and sense objects (*guṇāṁs*) as well as the living entity (*guṇinaḥ*)."

|| 10.63.40 ||

yan-māyā-mohita-dhiyaḥ putra-dāra-gṛhādiṣu

unmajjanti nimajjanti prasaktā vṛjinārṇave

TRANSLATION

Their intelligence bewildered by Your māyā, fully attached to child-ren, wife, home and so on, persons immersed in the ocean of material misery sometimes rise to the surface and sometimes sink down.

COMMENTARY

Śiva said, “Being merciful, You appear in this world to deliver the living entities. The living entities however, remain submerged (*nimajjanti*) in the ocean of material existence (*saṁsāra*).”

|| 10.63.41 ||

deva-dattam imaṁ labdhvā nṛ-lokam ajitendriyaḥ

yo nādriyeta tvat-pādau sa śocyo hy ātma-vañcakaḥ

TRANSLATION

One who has attained this human form of life as a gift from God, yet who fails to control his senses and honor Your feet, is surely to be pitied, for he is only cheating himself.

COMMENTARY

In this verse Śiva condemns those who do not worship Kṛṣṇa: “Having attained a human body given by You (*deva dattam imam*), the living entity absorbs himself in sense pleasure and disrespects Your feet.”

|| 10.63.42 ||

yas tvāṁ visṛjate martya ātmānaṁ priyam īśvaram

viparyayendriyārthārthaṁ viṣam atty amṛtaṁ tyajan

TRANSLATION

That mortal who rejects You—his true Self, dearmost friend, and Lord—for the sake of sense objects, whose nature is just the opposite, refuses nectar and instead consumes poison.

COMMENTARY

Śiva said, “He is most pitiable who rejects (*visrjate:tyajati*) You for the sake of sense objects such as children, which are just the opposite (*viparyayā:viparītāḥ*); not spiritual (*anātma*), not dear (*apriya*) and ungodly (*anīśvara*).”

|| 10.63.43 ||

ahaṁ brahmātha vibudhā munayaś cāmalāśayāḥ

sarvātmanā prapannās tvām ātmānaṁ preṣṭham īśvaram

TRANSLATION

I, Lord Brahmā, the other demigods and the pure-minded sages have all surrendered wholeheartedly unto You, our dearmost Self and Lord.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa asked, “I have forgiven whatever you did, so now what do you and the demigods accompanying you intend to do?” By describing Kṛṣṇa as the Supersoul, the dearmost Supreme Lord, Śiva informs Kṛṣṇa that “My fighting against You for the sake of Bāṇāsura, who is not the Supersoul, not dear and not the supreme controller, means that I myself have rejected nectar and taken poison. Thus in the previous verse it was myself whom I was condemning.”

|| 10.63.44 ||

taṁ tvā jagat-sthity-udayānta-hetuṁ samaṁ prasāntaṁ suhṛd-ātma-daivam

ananyam ekaṁ jagad-ātma-ketaṁ bhavāpavargāya bhajāma devam

TRANSLATION

Let us worship You, the Supreme Lord, to be freed from material life. You are the maintainer of the universe and the cause of its creation and demise. Equipoised and perfectly at peace, You are the true friend, Self and worshipable Lord. You are one without a second, the shelter of all the worlds and all souls.

COMMENTARY

In this verse Śiva prays for *Kṛṣṇa-bhakti*: “O Kṛṣṇa, birth after birth I worship You alone to attain the highest liberation (*bhavāpavarga*) of pure love of Godhead, characterized by unalloyed devotional service unto You, which is described in the Fifth Canto.” The imperative case is used to express supplication.

With this intention Śiva gives a description of Kṛṣṇa: “Because of Your supreme position, You are the cause of creation, maintenance and destruction of the universe, whereas others are not supreme. You are perfectly objective and balanced (*samaṁ*), whereas other living beings, having an incomplete grasp of reality, cannot be perfectly objective.

You are peaceful whereas all others are not. You are the friend and well-wisher of all whereas others are not benefactors. You are the Supreme Soul (*ātma daivam*), whereas others are not Paramātmā and therefore not brilliant (*daivam: dyotamānaḥ*). You are unique (*ananya*) whereas all others are not unique. But You are attached to Your devotee, as You have stated, *sādhavo hṛdayaṁ mahyaṁ sādhūnāṁ hṛdayaṁ tv aham*, 'The pure devotee is always within the core of My heart, and I am always in the heart of the pure devotee.' (SB 9.4.68) You are one, whereas others are many. You are the shelter (*ketam:āśrayam*) of all souls in all worlds, whereas others are not the shelter."

|| 10.63.45 ||

ayaṁ mameṣṭo dayito 'nuvartī mayābhayaṁ dattam amuṣya deva

sampādyatāṁ tad bhavataḥ prasādo yathā hi te daitya-patau prasādaḥ

TRANSLATION

This Bāṇāsura is my dear and faithful follower, and I have awarded him freedom from fear. Therefore, my Lord, please grant him Your mercy, just as You showed mercy to Prahlāda, the lord of the demons.

COMMENTARY

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said, "O Śiva, I am pleased with you. Please choose a boon."

Śiva replied, "O Lord, I cannot give up my attachment for my sinful follower Bāṇāsura. What can I do? Please be merciful to him. That is the benediction I choose." Then he speaks this verse: "Make Bāṇāsura fearless."

Kṛṣṇa**:** "Why?"

Śiva**:** "There is actually no good reason for Your favoring him. It is all just Your mercy."

Kṛṣṇa**:** "What type of mercy should I give?"

Śiva**:** "The same mercy that You gave to Prahlāda, the chief of the demons."

|| 10.63.46 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

yad āttha bhagavaṁs tvaṁ naḥ karavāma priyaṁ tava

bhavato yad vyavasitaṁ tan me sādhv anumoditam

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord said: My dear lord, for your pleasure We must certainly do what you have requested of Us. I fully agree with your conclusion.

|| 10.63.47 ||

avadhyo 'yaṁ mamāpy eṣa vairocani-suto 'suraḥ

prahrādāya varo datto na vadhyo me tavānvayaḥ

TRANSLATION

I will not kill this demonic son of Vairocani, for I gave Prahlāda Mahārāja the benediction that I would not kill any of his descendants.

|| 10.63.48 ||

darpopaśamanāyāsya pravṛkṇā bāhavo mayā

sūditaṁ ca balaṁ bhūri yac ca bhārāyitaṁ bhuvaḥ

TRANSLATION

It was to subdue Bāṇāsura's false pride that I severed his arms. And I slew his mighty army because it had become a burden upon the earth.

|| 10.63.49 ||

catvāro 'sya bhujāḥ śiṣṭā bhaviṣyaty ajarāmaraḥ

pārṣada-mukhyo bhavato na kutaścid-bhayo 'suraḥ

TRANSLATION

This demon, who still has four arms, will be immune to old age and death, and he will serve as one of your principal attendants. Thus he will have nothing to fear on any account.

|| 10.63.50 ||

iti labdhvābhayaṁ kṛṣṇaṁ praṇamya śirasāsuraḥ

prādyumniṁ ratham āropya sa-vadhvo samupānayat

TRANSLATION

Thus attaining freedom from fear, Bāṇāsura offered obeisances to Lord Kṛṣṇa by touching his head to the ground. Bāṇa then seated Aniruddha and His bride on their chariot and brought them before the Lord.

COMMENTARY

Bāṇāsura put Aniruddha on a chariot with his bride (*sa vadhva*).

|| 10.63.51 ||

akṣauhiṇyā parivṛtaṁ su-vāsaḥ-samalaṅkṛtam

sa-patnīkaṁ puras-kṛtya yayau rudrānumoditaḥ

TRANSLATION

At the front of the party Lord Kṛṣṇa then placed Aniruddha and His bride, both beautifully adorned with fine clothes and ornaments, and surrounded them with a full military division. Thus Lord Kṛṣṇa took His leave of Lord Śiva and departed.

|| 10.63.52 ||

sva-rājadhānīṁ samalaṅkṛtāṁ dhvajaiḥ sa-toraṇair ukṣita-mārga-catvarām

viveśa śaṅkhānaka-dundubhi-svanair abhyudyataḥ paura-suhṛd-dvijātibhiḥ

TRANSLATION

The Lord then entered His capital. The city was lavishly decorated with flags and victory arches, and its avenues and crossways were all sprinkled with water. As conchshells, ānakas and dundubhi drums resounded, the Lord's relatives, the brāhmaṇas and the general populace all came forward to greet Him respectfully.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa entered the city of Dvārakā.

|| 10.63.53 ||

ya evaṁ kṛṣṇa-vijayaṁ śaṅkareṇa ca saṁyugam

saṁsmaret prātar utthāya na tasya syāt parājayaḥ

TRANSLATION

Whoever rises early in the morning and remembers Lord Kṛṣṇa's victory in His battle with Lord Śiva will never experience defeat.

Thus ends the commentary on the Sixty-third Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Sixty-four

The Deliverance of King Nṛga

|| 10.64.1 ||

śrī-bādarāyaṇir uvāca

ekadopavanaṁ rājan jagmur yadu-kumārakāḥ

vihartuṁ sāmba-pradyumna cāru-bhānu-gadādayaḥ

TRANSLATION

Śrī Bādarāyaṇi said: O King, one day Sāmba, Pradyumna, Cāru, Bhānu, Gada and other young boys of the Yadu dynasty went to a small forest to play.

COMMENTARY

In this chapter, Kṛṣṇa rescues King Nṛga from a well, and hears about his giving charity. In this way Kṛṣṇa instructed His duly frightened devotees about charity and devotion to *brāhmaṇas*.

|| 10.64.2 ||

krīḍitvā su-ciraṁ tatra vicinvantaḥ pipāsitāḥ

jalaṁ ni rudake kūpeda dṛśuḥ sattvam adbhutam

TRANSLATION

After playing for a long time, they became thirsty. As they searched for water, they looked inside a dry well and saw a peculiar creature.

|| 10.64.3 ||

kṛkalāsaṁ giri-nibhaṁ vīkṣya vismita-mānasāḥ

tasya coddharaṇe yatnaṁ cakrus te kṛpayānvitāḥ

TRANSLATION

The boys were astonished to behold this creature, a lizard who looked like a hill. They felt sorry for it and tried to lift it out of the well.

COMMENTARY

The boys were astonished upon seeing such a huge lizard.

|| 10.64.4 ||

carma-jais tāntavaiḥ pāśair baddhvā patitam arbhakāḥ

nāśaknuran samuddhartuṁ kṛṣṇāyācakhyur utsukāḥ

TRANSLATION

They caught on to the trapped lizard with leather thongs and then with woven ropes, but still they could not lift it out. So they went to Lord Kṛṣṇa and excitedly told Him about the creature.

COMMENTARY

The boys tied the lizard with ropes made of leather and threads, and tried to lift it out of the well.

|| 10.64.5 ||

tatrāgatyāravindākṣo bhagavān viśva-bhāvanaḥ

vīkṣyojjahāra vāmena taṁ kareṇa sa līlayā

TRANSLATION

The lotus-eyed Supreme Lord, maintainer of the universe, went to the well and saw the lizard. Then with His left hand He easily lifted it out.

|| 10.64.6 ||

sa uttamaḥ-śloka-karābhimṛṣṭo vihāya sadyaḥ kṛkalāsa-rūpam

santapta-cāmīkara-cāru-varṇaḥ svargy adbhutālaṅkaraṇāmbara-srak

TRANSLATION

Touched by the hand of the glorious Supreme Lord, the being at once gave up its lizard form and assumed that of a resident of heaven. His complexion was beautifully colored like molten gold, and he was adorned with wonderful ornaments, clothes and garlands.

COMMENTARY

After giving up the lizard body he assumed the form of a demigod (*svargy:devaḥ*) with a molten gold complexion *(cāmīkara:suvarṇam*), dazzling ornaments, dress and garlands.

|| 10.64.7 ||

papraccha vidvān api tan-nidānaṁ janeṣu vikhyāpayituṁ mukundaḥ

kas tvaṁ mahā-bhāga vareṇya-rūpo devottamaṁ tvāṁ gaṇayāmi nūnam

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa understood the situation, but to inform people in general He inquired as follows: "Who are you, O greatly fortunate one? Seeing your excellent form, I think you must surely be an exalted demigod."

|| 10.64.8 ||

daśām imāṁ vā katamena karmaṇā samprāpito 'sy atad-arhaḥ su-bhadra

ātmānam ākhyāhi vivitsatāṁ no yan manyase naḥ kṣamam atra vaktum

TRANSLATION

“By what past activity were you brought to this condition? It seems you did not deserve such a fate, O good soul. We are eager to know about you, so please inform us about yourself—if, that is, you think this the proper time and place to tell us.”

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa asked, “If you think it fitting, then please tell us about yourself because we are eager to know (*vivitsatāṁ*).”

|| 10.64.9 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

iti sma rājā sampṛṣṭaḥ kṛṣṇenānanta-mūrtinā

mādhavaṁ praṇipatyāha kirīṭenārka-varcasā

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus questioned by Kṛṣṇa, whose forms are unlimited, the King, his helmet as dazzling as the sun, bowed down to Lord Mādhava and replied as follows.

|| 10.64.10 ||

nṛga uvāca

nṛgo nāma narendro ’ham ikṣvāku-tanayaḥ prabho

dāniṣv ākhyāyamāneṣu yadi te karṇam aspṛśam

TRANSLATION

King Nṛga said: I am a king known as Nṛga, the son of Ikṣvāku. Perhaps, Lord, You have heard of me when lists of charitable men were recited.

COMMENTARY

The word *yadi* (perhaps) in this case indicates “there is no doubt” as in the usage, “If the *Vedas* are authoritative evidence” which means “Since the *Vedas* are authoritative evidence.”

|| 10.64.11 ||

kiṁ nu te ’viditaṁ nātha sarva-bhūtātma-sākṣiṇaḥ

kālenāvyāhata-dṛśo vakṣye ’thāpi tavājñayā

TRANSLATION

What could possibly be unknown to You, O master? With vision undisturbed by time, You witness the minds of all living beings. Nevertheless, on Your order I will speak.

COMMENTARY

King Nṛga said, “What is unknown to You? Rather, You know everything!”

|| 10.64.12 ||

yāvatyaḥ sikatā bhūmer yāvatyo divi tārakāḥ

yāvatyo varṣa-dhārāś ca tāvatīr adadaṁ sma gāḥ

TRANSLATION

I gave in charity as many cows as there are grains of sand on the earth, stars in the heavens, or drops in a rain shower.

COMMENTARY

According to the previous authorities, these phrases indicate only that the King gave innumerable cows in charity. Others say that Nṛga’s statements about the number of cows donated are exactly true because a single cow given in charity at such a sacred place as Kurukṣetra or at such times as an eclipse of the sun is equivalent to giving ten million cows in charity.

|| 10.64.13 ||

payasvinīs taruṇīḥ śīla-rūpa- guṇopapannāḥ kapilā hema-śṛṅgīḥ

nyāyārjitā rūpya-khurāḥ sa-vatsā dukūla-mālābharaṇā dadāv aham

TRANSLATION

Young, brown, milk-laden cows, who were well behaved, beautiful and endowed with good qualities, who were all acquired honestly, and who had gilded horns, silver-plated hooves and decorations of fine ornamental cloths and garlands—such were the cows, along with their calves, that I gave in charity.

COMMENTARY

In this verse the king describes the particulars of the cows he gave in charity.

|| 10.64.14-15 ||

sv-alaṅkṛtebhyo guṇa-śīlavadbhyaḥ sīdat-kuṭumbebhya ṛta-vratebhyaḥ

tapaḥ-śruta-brahma-vadānya-sadbhyaḥ prādāṁ yuvabhyo dvija-puṅgavebhyaḥ

go-bhū-hiraṇyāyatanāśva-hastinaḥ kanyāḥ sa-dāsīs tila-rūpya-śayyāḥ

vāsāṁsi ratnāni paricchadān rathān iṣṭaṁ ca yajñaiś caritaṁ ca pūrtam

TRANSLATION

I first honored the brāhmaṇas who were recipients of my charity by decorating them with fine ornaments. Those most exalted brāhmaṇas, whose families were in need, were young and possessed of excellent character and qualities. They were dedicated to truth, famous for their austerity, vastly learned in the Vedic scriptures and saintly in their behavior. I gave them cows, land, gold and houses, along with horses, elephants and marriageable girls with maidservants, as well as sesame, silver, fine beds, clothing, jewels, furniture and chariots. In addition, I performed Vedic sacrifices and executed various pious welfare activities.

COMMENTARY

This verse gives the details of Nṛga's acts of charity. King Nṛga said, "I gave to *brāhmaṇas* who were well known for austerity (*tapa śruta*), and well-versed in the Vedas (*brahma-vadānya*) because of their diligent studies."

Verse fifteen describes other things he gave in charity. Besides giving (*prādāṁ*) to the *brāhmaṇas,* he also built (*caritaṁ*) water tanks and wells for the general populace.

|| 10.64.16 ||

kasyacid dvija-mukhyasya bhraṣṭā gaur mama go-dhane

sampṛktāviduṣā sā ca mayā dattā dvijātaye

TRANSLATION

Once a cow belonging to a certain first-class brāhmaṇa wandered away and entered my herd. Unaware of this, I gave that cow in charity to a different brāhmaṇa.

COMMENTARY

"Please tell us what sin led to your becoming a lizard?" King Nṛga answers in this verse: "One cow belonging to a *brāhmaṇa* strayed from the herd and mixed with my herd. Not knowing (*āviduṣā*) that it belonged to that *brāhmaṇa,* I gave the cow to another *brāhmaṇa*."

|| 10.64.17 ||

tāṁ nīyamānāṁ tat-svāmī dṛṣṭrovāca mameti tam

mameti parigrāhy āha nṛgo me dattavān iti

TRANSLATION

When the cow's first owner saw her being led away, he said, "She is mine!" The second brāhmaṇa, who had accepted her as a gift, replied, "No, she's mine! Nṛga gave her to me."

|| 10.64.18 ||

viprau vivadamānau mām ūcatuḥ svārtha-sādhakau

bhavān dātāpaharteti tac chrutvā me 'bhavad bhramaḥ

TRANSLATION

As the two brāhmaṇas argued, each trying to fulfill his own purpose, they came to me. One of them said, "You gave me this cow," and the other said, "But you stole her from me." Hearing this, I was bewildered.

COMMENTARY

The second brāhmaṇa who had accepted the gift said, "You have given the cow to me." The first owner said, "You took her away from me." Hearing that, I was put in extreme perplexity (*bhramaḥ*).

|| 10.64.19-20 ||

anunītāv ubhau viprau dharma-kṛcchra-gatena vai

gavāṁ lakṣaṁ prakṛṣṭānāṁ dāsyāmy eṣā pradīyatām

bhavantāv anugṛhṇītāṁ kiṅkarasyāvijānataḥ

samuddharataṁ māṁ kṛcchrāt patantaṁ niraye 'śucau

TRANSLATION

Finding myself in a terrible dilemma concerning my duty in the situation, I humbly entreated both the brāhmaṇas: "I will give one hundred thousand of the best cows in exchange for this one. Please give her back to me. Your good selves should be merciful to me, your servant. I did not know what I was doing. Please save me from this difficult situation, or I'll surely fall into a filthy hell."

|| 10.64.21 ||

nāhaṁ pratīcche vai rājann ity uktvā svāmy apākramat

nānyad gavām apy ayutam icchāmīty aparo yayau

TRANSLATION

The present owner of the cow said, "I don't want anything in exchange for this cow, O King," and went away. The other brāhmaṇa declared, "I don't want even ten thousand more cows [than you are offering]," and he too went away.

COMMENTARY

"I do not accept gifts from kings." Saying this, the *brāhmaṇa* gave up his cow and left. The other *brāhmaṇa* refused also saying, "I am not willing to give up this cow for the *lakh* of cows you mention or even for another ten thousand cows in addition to that." He also left.

|| 10.64.22 ||

etasminn antare yāmair dūtair nīto yama-kṣayam

yamena pṛṣṭas tatrāhaṁ deva-deva jagat-pate

TRANSLATION

O Lord of lords, O master of the universe, the agents of Yamarāja, taking advantage of the opportunity thus created, later carried me to his abode. There Yamarāja himself questioned me.

COMMENTARY

The description in this verse took place after Nṛga died. The Yamadūtas brought him to the abode of Yamarāja (*yama-kṣayam*) known as Saṁyamanī.

|| 10.64.23 ||

pūrvaṁ tvam aśubhaṁ bhuṅkṣa utāho nṛpate śubham

nāntaṁ dānasya dharmasya paśye lokasya bhāsvataḥ

TRANSLATION

[Yamarāja said:] My dear King, do you wish to experience the results of your sins first, or those of your piety? Indeed, I see no end to the dutiful charity you have performed, or to your consequent enjoyment in the radiant heavenly planets.

COMMENTARY

Yamarāja said, “Do you first want to experience the sinful reaction for unknowingly taking away the *brāhmaṇa’s* cow, or the pious reactions of your charities? I do not see an end to the results of your charity. Nor do I see an end to your living in Svargaloka (*bhāsvataḥ lokasya*).”

|| 10.64.24 ||

pūrvaṁ devāśubhaṁ bhuñja iti prāha pateti saḥ

tāvad adrākṣam ātmānaṁ kṛkalāsaṁ patan prabho

TRANSLATION

I replied, “First, my lord, let me suffer my sinful reactions,” and Yamarāja said, “Then fall!” At once I fell, and while falling I saw myself becoming a lizard, O master.

COMMENTARY

King Nṛga said, “First I will experience the results of my sins.” Yamarāja said, “Then fall.”

|| 10.64.25 ||

brahmaṇyasya vadānyasya tava dāsasya keśava

smṛtir nādyāpi vidhvastā bhavat-sandarśanārthinaḥ

TRANSLATION

O Keśava, as Your servant I was devoted to the brāhmaṇas and generous to them, and I always hankered for Your audience. Therefore even till now I have never forgotten [my past life].

COMMENTARY

Nṛga was performing *karma* mixed with a little devotion (*karma-miśra-bhakti*). Taking shelter of this mixed *bhakti*, Nṛga thus ex-pressed himself humbly before Kṛṣṇa as His servant (*tava dāsasya*).

The phrase *bhavat-sandarśana-arthinaḥ*, "always hankered to see You" refers to a great devotee King Nṛga had once met. This devotee wanted to build a temple for a beautiful Deity of Govinda, and obtain scriptures like the *Gītā* and *Bhāgavataṁ*. Being very generous, Nṛga readily supplied these things. The devotee was so satisfied that he blessed Nṛga: "O King, I give blessings that you may see the Lord." From that time on, Nṛga had a great desire to see the Lord.

|| 10.64.26 ||

sa tvaṁ kathaṁ mama vibho 'kṣi-pathaḥ parātmā

yogeśvaraḥ śruti-dṛśāmala-hṛd-vibhāvyaḥ

sākṣād adhokṣaja uru-vyasanāndha-buddheḥ

syān me 'nudṛśya iha yasya bhavāpavargaḥ

TRANSLATION

O almighty one, how is it that my eyes see You here before me? You are the Supreme Soul, whom the greatest masters of mystic yoga can meditate upon within their pure hearts only by employing the spiritual eye of the Vedas. Then how, O transcendental Lord, are You directly visible to me, since my intelligence has been blinded by the severe tribulations of material life? Only one who has finished his material entanglement in this world should be able to see You.

COMMENTARY

The memory "of me" completes the idea. Nṛga did not openly say "of me" due to his humility and for other reasons. Even today, both in the body of a lizard and in the body of a very proud demigod, which also is unfavorable for such remembrance, that memory has not been lost. Astonished at his seeing Kṛṣṇa, who is rarely seen, Nṛga thrilled at his good fortune.

He said, "How did You become visible to my eyes, since even great mystic *yogīs* such as Sanaka can only meditate upon You through the eyes of the *Upaniṣads* in their purified hearts? What is more, You are directly Adhokṣaja, the Personality of Godhead Himself who broke the cart demon. Yet You have shown Yourself to such a lowly person as me, whose intelligence has been blinded by great suffering. Furthermore, You are usually only visible to those who have destroyed the bondage of *saṁsāra* (*bhavāpavargaḥ*). So why are You visible to me? It should not be so. It happened only by the blessing of some great devotee."

|| 10.64.27-28 ||

deva-deva jagan-nātha govinda puruṣottama

nārāyaṇa hṛṣīkeśa puṇya-ślokācyutāvyaya

anujānīhi māṁ kṛṣṇa yāntaṁ deva-gatiṁ prabho

yatra kvāpi sataś ceto bhūyān me tvat-padāspadam

TRANSLATION

O Devadeva, Jagannātha, Govinda, Puruṣottama, Nārāyaṇa, Hṛṣīkeśa, Puṇyaśloka, Acyuta, Avyaya! O Kṛṣṇa, please permit me to depart for the world of the demigods. Wherever I live, O master, may my mind always take shelter of Your feet.

COMMENTARY

His faith emboldened upon receiving Kṛṣṇa's mercy and thus attaining the status of servitude, King Nṛga begins to recite the Lord's names and then asks permission to leave. The spirit of his prayer is as follows: "You are Devadeva, God even of the gods, and Jagannātha, the master of the universe, so please be my master. O Govinda, please make me Your property with the same merciful glance You use to enchant the cows. You can do this because You are Puruṣottama, the supreme form of Godhead. O Narāyaṇa, since You are the foundation (*ayanam:adhiṣthānam*) of the living entities (*nārāḥ:jīvāḥ*), please be my support even though I am a fallen living entity (*jīvā*). O Hṛṣīkesa (master of the senses), please make my senses concentrate on You. O Puṇyaśloka, now You have become famous as the deliverer of Nṛga. O Acyuta, please never leave my heart. You will not suffer any loss (*avyaya*) in doing so. May my mind always have Your feet as its object of meditation."

|| 10.64.29 ||

namas te sarva-bhāvāya brahmaṇe 'nanta-śaktaye

kṛṣṇāya vāsudevāya yogānāṁ pataye namaḥ

TRANSLATION

I offer my repeated obeisances unto You, Kṛṣṇa, the son of Vāsudeva. You are the source of all beings, the Supreme Absolute Truth, the possessor of unlimited potencies, the master of all spiritual disciplines.

COMMENTARY

“I have an attitude of servitude toward You, but You are the object of all types of love. Therefore, I offer respects to You, within whom exist all *bhāvas*, loving relationships.”

Nṛga first declares Kṛṣṇa to be the shelter of the mood of neutrality (*śānta-bhāva*) by calling Kṛṣṇa the personified form of Brahman (*brahmaṇe*). Next Nṛga declares Kṛṣṇa to be the shelter of the mood of servitude (*dāsya-bhāva*) when he says *ananta-śaktaye*, “You are the possessor of unlimited powers” or “the form of grandeur.” Nṛga declares Kṛṣṇa to be the shelter of the mood of friendship (*sakhya-bhāva*) by saying *kṛṣṇāya*, “He who gives constant bliss,” which is also the name of Arjuna, who had a similar name, form and qualities as Kṛṣṇa, being treated equally by Him. This is confirmed in the *Mahābhārata, Udyoga-parva* 71.4:

> *kṛṣir bhū-vācakaḥ śabdo ṇaś ca nirvṛti-vācakaḥ*
>
> *tayor aikyaṁ paraṁ brahma kṛṣṇa ity abhidhīyate*
>
> “The word *kṛṣ* is the attractive feature of the Lord’s existence and *na* means ‘spiritual bliss.’ When the verb *kṛṣ* is added to *na* it becomes Kṛṣṇa, which indicates the Absolute Truth.”

Nṛga declares Kṛṣṇa to be the shelter of the parental mood (*vātsalya-bhāva*) by saying *vāsudevāya*, “to the son of Vasudeva.” Nṛga states that Kṛṣṇa is the shelter of the mood of conjugal love (*mādhurya-bhāva*) by saying “to the husband” (*pataye:bhartre*), of those women who have deep devotion (*yogānām:bhakti-yoga-mayīnām*) like Rukmiṇī.

|| 10.64.30 ||

ity uktvā taṁ parikramya pādau spṛṣṭvā sva-maulinā

anujñāto vimānāgryam āruhat paśyatāṁ nṛṇām

TRANSLATION

Having spoken thus, Mahārāja Nṛga circumambulated Lord Kṛṣṇa and touched his crown to the Lord’s feet. Granted permission to depart, King Nṛga then boarded a wonderful celestial airplane as all the people present looked on.

COMMENTARY

Granting Nṛga permission to leave, Kṛṣṇa instructed him, “After your enjoyment is finished, you will attain Me.”

|| 10.64.31 ||

kṛṣṇaḥ parijanaṁ prāha bhagavān devakī-sutaḥ

brahmaṇya-devo dharmātmā rājanyān anuśikṣayan

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Personality of Godhead—Lord Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī—who is especially devoted to the brāhmaṇas and who embodies the essence of religion, then spoke to His personal associates and thus instructed the royal class in general.

|| 10.64.32 ||

durjaraṁ bata brahma-svaṁ bhuktam agner manāg api

tejīyaso ’pi kim uta rājñāṁ īśvara-māninām

TRANSLATION

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] How indigestible is the property of a brāhmaṇa, even when enjoyed just slightly and by one more potent than fire! What then to speak of kings who try to enjoy it, presuming themselves lords.

COMMENTARY

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said, “The property of a *brāhmaṇa*, being enjoyed even a little by theft or other means, is indigestible even for a person powerful as fire due to great austerities or mystic perfections.”

|| 10.64.33 ||

nāhaṁ hālāhalaṁ manye viṣaṁ yasya pratikriyā

brahma-svaṁ hi viṣaṁ proktaṁ nāsya pratividdhir bhuvi

TRANSLATION

I do not consider hālāhala to be real poison, because it has an antidote. But a brāhmaṇa's property, when stolen, can truly be called poison, for it has no antidote in this world.

COMMENTARY

"If it is like indigestible food, it cannot be as severe as actual poison."

Kṛṣṇa said, "Śiva could digest the *hālāhala* poison so that was not real poison. But there is no antidote for stealing from the *brāhmaṇa*."

|| 10.64.34 ||

hinasti viṣam attāraṁ vahnir adbhiḥ praśāmyati

kulaṁ sa-mūlaṁ dahati brahma-svāraṇi-pāvakaḥ

TRANSLATION

Poison kills only the person who ingests it, and an ordinary fire may be extinguished with water. But the fire generated from the kindling wood of a brāhmaṇa's property burns the thief's entire family down to the root.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, "Even taking poison is preferable to taking a *brāhmaṇa's* property, because poison only destroys the drinker."

"Can taking a *brāhmaṇa's* property be compared to fire in terms of its killing a conditioned soul by placing him in the cycle of birth and death?"

Kṛṣṇa answered, "A fire leaves the roots of a tree intact, but the fire whose kindling wood is a *brāhmaṇa's* property is a special kind of fire, since it cannot be extinguished. It is just like the fire burning within the cavity of an old tree, which in the course of time grows to a great size and cannot be put out even with the water of numerous rainfalls. Rather it burns the whole tree from within, all the way down to the roots. Similarly, the fire ignited by stealing a *brāhmaṇa's* property is the most deadly because it burns one's family to the root."

|| 10.64.35 ||

brahma-svaṁ duranujñātaṁ bhuktaṁ hanti tri-pūruṣam

prasahya tu balād bhuktaṁ daśa pūrvān daśāparān

TRANSLATION

If a person enjoys a brāhmaṇa's property without receiving due permission, that property destroys three generations of his family. But if he takes it by force or gets the government or other outsiders to help him usurp it, then ten generations of his ancestors and ten generations of his descendants are all destroyed.

COMMENTARY

"My friend and helper, without my giving it, is enjoying my wealth, therefore let him enjoy it." This is the meaning of not receiving permission (*duranujñātam*). Enjoying in this way destroys oneself, one's sons and one's grandsons (*tri-pūruṣa*). If one enjoys by using force or the influence of the king, then ten generations in the past and future will suffer.

|| 10.64.36 ||

rājāno rāja-lakṣmyāndhā nātma-pātaṁ vicakṣate

nirayaṁ ye 'bhimanyante brahma-svaṁ sādhu bāliśāḥ

TRANSLATION

Members of the royal order, blinded by royal opulence, fail to foresee their own downfall. Childishly hankering to enjoy a brāhmaṇa's property, they are actually hankering to go to hell.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, "Those who desire a *brāhmaṇa's* property for themselves also desire hell. They are foolish, not seeing their own downfall."

|| 10.64.37-38 ||

gṛhṇanti yāvataḥ pāṁśūn krandatām aśru-bindavaḥ

viprāṇāṁ hṛta-vṛttīnām vadānyānāṁ kuṭumbinām

rājāno rāja-kulyāś ca tāvato ’bdān niraṅkuśāḥ

kumbhī-pākeṣu pacyante brahma-dāyāpahāriṇaḥ

TRANSLATION

For as many years as there are particles of dust touched by the tears of generous brāhmaṇas who have dependent families and whose property is stolen, uncontrolled kings who usurp a brāhmaṇa’s property are cooked, along with their royal families, in the hell known as Kumbhīpāka.

COMMENTARY

The kings and those born in his family must suffer in hell.

|| 10.64.39 ||

sva-dattāṁ para-dattāṁ vā brahma-vṛttiṁ harec ca yaḥ

ṣaṣṭi-varṣa-sahasrāṇi viṣṭhāyāṁ jāyate kṛmiḥ

TRANSLATION

Whether it be his own gift or someone else’s, a person who steals a brāhmaṇa’s property will take birth as a worm in feces for sixty thousand years.

|| 10.64.40 ||

na me brahma-dhanaṁ bhūyād yad gṛdhvālpāyuṣo narāḥ

parājitāś cyutā rājyād bhavanty udvejino ’hayaḥ

TRANSLATION

I do not desire brāhmaṇas’ wealth. Those who lust after it become short-lived and are defeated. They lose their kingdoms and become snakes, who trouble others.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “One loses life span just by hankering after a *brāhmaṇa’s* property, then what to speak of actually taking it.”

|| 10.64.41 ||

vipraṁ kṛtāgasam api naiva druhyata māmakāḥ

ghnantaṁ bahu śapantaṁ vā namas-kuruta nityaśaḥ

TRANSLATION

My dear followers, never treat a learned brāhmaṇa harshly, even if he has sinned. Even if he attacks you physically or repeatedly curses you, always continue to offer him obeisances.

COMMENTARY

“But,” Kṛṣṇa’s followers might question, “If a *brāhmaṇa* steals our property or is inimical without cause, what is to be done?” Kṛṣṇa answers in two verses: “O My followers (*māmakāḥ*). I am instructing anyone who is My devotee, not just you. Otherwise such persons should no longer think of themselves as My followers.”

|| 10.64.42 ||

yathāhaṁ praṇame viprān anukālaṁ samāhitaḥ

tathā namata yūyaṁ ca yo ’nyathā me sa daṇḍa-bhāk

TRANSLATION

Just us I always carefully bow down to brāhmaṇas, so all of you should likewise bow down to them. I will punish anyone who acts otherwise.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “Just as I pay respects (*praṇame*), you should pay respects.”

|| 10.64.43 ||

brāhmaṇārtho hy apahṛto hartāraṁ pātayaty adhaḥ

ajānantam api hy enaṁ nṛgaṁ brāhmaṇa-gaur iva

TRANSLATION

When a brāhmaṇa's property is stolen, even unknowingly, it certainly causes the person who takes it to fall down, just as the brāhmaṇa's cow did to Nṛga.

COMMENTARY

This is not an exaggeration to instill fear. There is direct proof as stated in this verse.

|| 10.64.44 ||

evaṁ viśrāvya bhagavān mukundo dvārakaukasaḥ

pāvanaḥ sarva-lokānāṁ viveśa nija-mandiram

TRANSLATION

Having thus instructed the residents of Dvārakā, Lord Mukunda, purifier of all the worlds, entered His palace.

Thus ends the commentary on the Sixty-fourth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Sixty-five

Balarāma goes to Vṛndāvana

|| 10.65.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

balabhadraḥ kuru-śreṣṭha bhagavān ratham āsthitaḥ

suhṛd-didṛkṣur utkaṇṭhaḥ prayayau nanda-gokulam

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O best of the Kurus, once Lord Balarāma, eager to visit His well-wishing friends, mounted His chariot and traveled to Nanda Gokula.

COMMENTARY

In this chapter Balarāma visits Vṛndāvana, associates with His friends, plays with His *gopīs*, and drags the River Yamunā. Why did Kṛṣṇa, the great ocean of *prema*, not go to Vraja? This is answered as follows:

preyasīḥ prema-vikhyātāḥ pitarāv ati-vatsalau

prema-vaśyaś ca kṛṣṇas tāṁs tyaktvā naḥ katham eṣyati

iti matvaiva yādavaḥ pratyabadhnan harer gatau

vraja-prema-pravardhi sva-līlādhīnatvam īyuṣaḥ

The Yadus thought, “The *gopīs* are famous for their pure, ecstatic love, and Kṛṣṇa’s parents have intense love for Him. Kṛṣṇa is controlled by pure love, so if He goes to see the Vrajavāsīs, how will He be able to leave them and come back to us? With this in mind, the Yadus prevented Kṛṣṇa from going, knowing that He becomes subservient to the pastimes in which He reciprocates the ever-increasing love of the Vrajavāsīs.”

But then neither should Baladeva be able to leave His brother Kṛṣṇa, who is dearer to Him than His own life. This argument is settled by saying that Balarāma had such eagerness (*utkaṇṭhaḥ*) that His discrimination and sense control disappeared.

|| 10.65.2 ||

pariṣvaktaś cirotkaṇṭhair gopair gopībhir eva ca

rāmo ’bhivādya pitarāv āśīrbhir abhinanditaḥ

TRANSLATION

Having long suffered the anxiety of separation, the cowherd men and their wives embraced Lord Balarāma. The Lord then offered respects to His parents, and they joyfully greeted Him with prayers.

COMMENTARY

nityānanda-svarūpo ’pi prema-tapto vrajaukasām

yayau kṛṣṇam api tyaktvā yas taṁ rāmaṁ muhuḥ stumaḥ

“Let us repeatedly glorify Balarāma. Although He is the original form of eternal bliss, Nityānanda, due the pangs of love in separation from the residents of Vraja, He went to see them, even at the cost of leaving Kṛṣṇa.”

Balarāma was embraced by elder *gopīs* (*gopībhiḥ*) the age of His mother. He greeted His parents, and they greeted Him with words of blessing according to their parental love.

|| 10.65.3 ||

ciraṁ naḥ pāhi dāśārha sānujo jagad-īśvaraḥ

ity āropyāṅkam ālihgya netraiḥ siṣicatur jalaiḥ

TRANSLATION

[Nanda and Yaśodā prayed,] "O descendant of Daśārha, O Lord of the universe, may You and Your younger brother Kṛṣṇa ever protect us." Saying this, they raised Śrī Balarāma onto their laps, embraced Him and moistened Him with tears from their eyes.

COMMENTARY

"Everywhere we hear that You along with Your brother are the Lords of the universe. Then why do You not protect Your elderly parents?" Saying this, first Nanda Mahārāja and then Yaśodā put Rāma on their laps by force, kissed and embraced Him, and drenched Him with their tears.

|| 10.65.4-6 ||

gopa-vṛddhāṁś ca vidhi-vad yaviṣṭhair abhivanditaḥ

yathā-vayo yathā-sakhyaṁ yathā-sambandham ātmanaḥ

samupetyātha gopālān hāsya-hasta-grahādibhiḥ

viśrāntam sukham āsīnaṁ papracchuḥ paryupāgatāḥ

pṛṣṭāś cānāmayaṁ sveṣu prema-gadgadayā girā

kṛṣṇe kamala-patrākṣe sannyastākhila-rādhasaḥ

TRANSLATION

Lord Balarāma then paid proper respects to the elder cowherd men, and the younger ones all greeted Him respectfully. He met them all with smiles, handshakes and so on, dealing personally with each one according to age, degree of friendship, and family relationship. Then, after resting, the Lord

accepted a comfortable seat, and they all gathered around Him. With voices faltering out of love for Him, those cowherds, who had dedicated everything to lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa, asked about the health of their dear ones [in Dvārakā], and Balarāma in turn asked about the cowherds' welfare.

COMMENTARY

After greeting the elder cowherd men, Balarāma was welcomed by the younger men, according to proper order. According to age, friendship and relationship Balarāma associated intimately with them with smiles, hand shakes and embraces. Having rested after eating, Balarāma again sat down comfortably, and they asked about His welfare. Balarāma's voice choked with *prema* for His beloved cowherd friends as He asked about their welfare in return. The cowherd men had completely renounced (*sannyasta*) their daily bodily functions. In other words, beginning from the very day Kṛṣṇa left Vṛndāvana, they no longer carried out the natural activities of dressing, eating and sleeping.

|| 10.65.7 ||

kaccin no bāndhavā rāma sarve kuśalam āsate

kaccit smaratha no rāma yūyaṁ dāra-sutānvitāḥ

TRANSLATION

[The cowherds said:] O Rāma, are all our relatives doing well? And Rāma, do all of you, with your wives and children, still remember us?

COMMENTARY

The elder cowherd men asked, "Are our friends the Yādavas well?"

The men of the same age asked, "Do You remember us (*kaccit smaratha naḥ*)?"

|| 10.65.8 ||

diṣṭyā kaṁso hataḥ pāpo diṣṭyā muktāḥ suhṛj-janāḥ

nihatya nirjitya ripūn diṣṭyā durgaṁ samāśrītāḥ

TRANSLATION

It is our great fortune that sinful Kaṁsa has been killed and our dear relatives have been freed. And it is also our good fortune that our relatives have killed and defeated their enemies and found complete security in a great fortress.

|| 10.65.9 ||

gopyo hasantyaḥ papracchū rāma-sandarśanādṛtāḥ

kaccid āste sukhaṁ kṛṣṇaḥ pura-strī-jana-vallabhaḥ

TRANSLATION

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Honored to have the personal audience of Lord Balarāma, the young gopīs smiled and asked Him, "Is Kṛṣṇa, the darling of the city women, living happily?"

COMMENTARY

The smiling (*hasantyaḥ*) of the *gopīs* was a sign of their *unmāda*, transcendental madness in *prema*. Otherwise how would it be possible for such extremely shy girls suffering such intense pain of separation from Kṛṣṇa to smile in front of Baladeva? Understanding that this was a sign of their *mahābhāva*, Balarāma gave them great respect, rather than disregarding them. Thus it is described that Balarāma honored (*ādṛtāḥ*) them with His affectionate glance (*rāma sandarśanā*), because He understood that these *gopīs* were the dearly beloved devotees of Kṛṣṇa, and were filled with pure love for His younger brother.

The *gopīs* asked, "Is Kṛṣṇa happy there in Dvārakā?"

Balarāma said, "How could Kṛṣṇa be happy being separated from you?"

The *gopīs* replied, "Kṛṣṇa is enjoying with many beautiful women in the city. So how could He be suffering any unhappiness of separation from us village girls? Certainly He must be happy."

|| 10.65.10 ||

kaccit smarati vā bandhūn pitaraṁ mātaraṁ ca saḥ

apy asau mātaraṁ draṣṭuṁ sakṛd apy āgamiṣyati

api vā smarate 'smākam anusevāṁ mahā-bhujaḥ

TRANSLATION

"Does He remember His family members, especially His father and mother? Do you think He will ever come back even once to see His mother? And does mighty-armed Kṛṣṇa remember the service we always did for Him?"

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs* said, "Well, Kṛṣṇa might not remember us, but perhaps He remembers His paternal and maternal relatives, and His father Nanda and mother Yaśodā."

We know for a fact that the women of the city cannot be better than us at giving Kṛṣṇa conjugal pleasures. Kṛṣṇa must remember us for our making flower garlands, smearing sandalwood on His body, and making fans, beds and canopies of flowers and young leaves. With this in mind the gopīs asked, "Does Kṛṣṇa sometimes remember the services (*smarate 'smākam anusevāṁ*) we did for Him? We do not know if Kṛṣṇa's strong arms (*mahā-bhujaḥ*) are still smeared with *kuṅkuma* and unguents now that He is no longer devoted to us." In other words, the *gopīs* are saying, "We cannot imagine to what extent Kṛṣṇa is involved in conjugal dealings now that He is separated from us."

|| 10.65.11-12 ||

mātaraṁ pitaraṁ bhrātṝn patīn putrān svasṝn api

yad-arthe jahima dāśārha dustyajān sva-janān prabho

tā naḥ sadyaḥ parityajya gataḥ sañchinna-sauhṛdaḥ

kathaṁ nu tādṛśaṁ strībhir na śraddhīyeta bhāṣitam

TRANSLATION

"For Kṛṣṇa's sake, O descendant of Dāśārha, we abandoned our mothers, fathers, brothers, husbands, children and sisters, even though these family relations are difficult to give up. But now, O Lord, that same Kṛṣṇa has suddenly abandoned us and gone away, breaking off all affectionate ties with us. And yet how could any woman fail to trust His promises?"

COMMENTARY

Balarāma said, “But, most beloved *gopīs* of Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa is full of love for you and always remembers you.”

Denying this the *gopīs* replied, “No, we do not have faith in Kṛṣṇa’s love, since He rejected us, who were solely devoted to Him.” They express this in a verse and a half. The *gopīs* continued, “Though we gave up everything for Kṛṣṇa, He gave us up immediately and left.”

Balarāma, “Why didn’t you do something to prevent Him from going away? Or why didn’t you go with Him?”

Gopīs**:** “Kṛṣṇa just tore our bonds of love (*sauhrdaḥ*) to shreds like a blade of grass and left. Therefore, tell us what we should have done?”

Balarāma**:** “Since you are maintaining your lives without Him, you also must have broken your ties of love for Him.”

Gopīs**:** “Not at all. By His words, ‘I will return to you,’ repeatedly sent through messengers, Kṛṣṇa retied the fetters of love even after they were broken. Again He took hold of our life airs as they were about to leave us and reestablished them.”

Balarāma**:** “If you believe Kṛṣṇa will return, then why are you so disturbed?”

Gopīs**:** “No, this is not correct. Since even now Kṛṣṇa has still not come, we have concluded that whatever He said was false.”

Balarāma**:** “Why did you believe what He said in the first place?”

Gopīs: “How could unintelligent, straight-forward women like us not believe His words?”

|| 10.65.13 ||

kathaṁ nu gṛhṇanty anavasthitātmano vacaḥ kṛta-ghnasya budhāḥ pura-striyaḥ

gṛhṇanti vai citra-kathasya sundara-smitāvalokocchvasita-smarāturāḥ

TRANSLATION

“How can intelligent city women possibly trust the words of one whose heart is so unsteady and who is so ungrateful? They must believe Him because He speaks so wonderfully, and also because His beautiful smiling glances arouse their lust.”

COMMENTARY

Some *gopīs* speak the first two lines of this verse, “Furthermore, we women of the forest are unintelligent, but how can the intelligent city women believe Kṛṣṇa’s words?” Other *gopīs* reply in the second two lines: “Though Kṛṣṇa speaks lies, it sounds very wonderful (*citra kathasya*) and enjoyable when those words come from His mouth. Not being able to give up the taste of those talks, the queens continue to listen. There is also another reason. They are disturbed by the lust which arises and grows to prominence (*ucchvasita*) from Kṛṣṇa’s smiling glance.”

|| 10.65.14 ||

kiṁ nas tat-kathayā gopyaḥ kathāḥ kathayatāparāḥ

yāty asmābhir vinā kālo yadi tasya tathaiva naḥ

TRANSLATION

“Why bother talking about Him, dear gopī? Please talk of something else. If He passes His time without us, then we shall similarly pass ours [without Him].”

COMMENTARY

Other *gopīs*, agitated by love in the mood of jealousy (*māna*), address the *gopīs* who have already spoken. They said, “Time passes for both Kṛṣṇa and us, but the difference is that He passes His time happily and we pass our time miserably. We are also different from other women. If other women are together with their lovers, they live, and if they are separated, they die. But we neither live nor die. This is the fate Providence has written on our foreheads. Alas, what remedy can we find?”

|| 10.65.15 ||

iti prahasitaṁ śaurer jalpitaṁ cāru-vīkṣitam

gatiṁ prema-pariṣvaṅgaṁ smarantyo ruruduḥ striyaḥ

TRANSLATION

While speaking these words, the young cowherd women remembered Lord Śauri's laughter, His pleasing conversations with them, His attractive glances, His style of walking and His loving embraces. Thus they began to cry.

COMMENTARY

The *gopīs* thought, "After piercing our hearts with the five arrows of His sweet smiles, sweet talks, enticing glances, graceful gait and His loving embraces (*prema-pariṣvaṅgaṁ*), the Kṛṣṇa moon disappeared from us. So how will the city women not die when He does the same to them?" Overwhelmed with these thoughts, the distressed young *gopīs* started crying right in front of Balarāma.

|| 10.65.16 ||

saṅkarṣaṇas tāḥ kṛṣṇasya sandeśair hṛdayaṁ-gamaiḥ

sāntvayām āsa bhagavān nānānunaya-kovidaḥ

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord Balarāma, the attractor of all, being expert at various kinds of conciliation, consoled the gopīs by relaying to them the confidential messages Lord Kṛṣṇa had sent with Him. These messages deeply touched the gopīs' hearts.

COMMENTARY

It should be understood that Kṛṣṇa dispatched Baladeva and Uddhava with His intimate messages (*kṛṣṇasya sandeśair*) because they were both His trusted friends (*sakhya-bhāva*), without consideration of their other sentiments of servitude (*dāsya-bhāva*, Uddhava) and parental love (*vātsalya-bhāva*, Baladeva). The use of the plural form (*sandeśair*) indicates that Kṛṣṇa sent many messages not one. Some messages instructed the *gopīs* in transcendental knowledge, some were sweet and apologetic, and some were dignified. Being heart felt (*hṛdayam-gamaiḥ*), Kṛṣṇa's messages could not be revealed publicly because of their confidential nature.

Balarāma boldly exclaimed, "Dear *gopīs*, now that I have consoled you, I will go to Dvārakā and bring Kṛṣṇa here by force. I am not exclusively under Kṛṣṇa's control like Uddhava." In this way Balarāma displayed His expertise in conciliation (*nānānunaya-kovidaḥ*).

|| 10.65.17 ||

dvau māsau tatra cāvātsīn madhuṁ mādhavaṁ eva ca

rāmaḥ kṣapāsu bhagavān gopīnāṁ ratim āvahan

TRANSLATION

Lord Balarāma, the Personality of Godhead, resided there for the two months of Madhu and Mādhava, and during the nights He gave His cowherd girlfriends conjugal pleasure.

COMMENTARY

According to Śrīdhara Svāmī, the month of Madhu is Caitra and Mādhava is Vaiṣākha, the first two months (spring) of the year. Śrīdhara Svāmī states that the *gopīs* who enjoyed conjugal affairs with Balarāma during His visit to Gokula had not taken part in Kṛṣṇa's rāsa dance, being too young at the time. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī says that during the pastime of Holī when Kṛṣṇa killed Saṅkhacūḍa, the gopīs Balarāma enjoyed with were different from the ones Kṛṣṇa enjoyed with.

|| 10.65.18 ||

pūrṇa-candra-kalā-mṛṣṭe kaumudī-gandha-vāyunā

yamunopavane reme sevite strī-gaṇair vṛtaḥ

TRANSLATION

In the company of numerous women, Lord Balarāma enjoyed in a garden by the Yamunā River. This garden was bathed in the rays of the full moon and caressed by breezes bearing the fragrance of night-blooming lotuses.

COMMENTARY

Balarāma enjoyed in a garden beside the Yamunā which was bright with the rays of the full moon, fragrant with the scent of blooming white lotuses, and served by refreshing cool breezes. Balarāma's conjugal pastimes took place in a small forest alongside the Yamunā known as Śrirāma-ghaṭṭa, which is far from the site of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *rāsa* dance.

|| 10.65.19 ||

varuṇa-preṣitā devī vāruṇī vṛkṣa-koṭarāt

patantī tad vanaṁ sarvaṁ sva-gandhenādhyavāsayat

TRANSLATION

Sent by the demigod Varuṇa, the divine Vāruṇī liquor flowed from a tree hollow and made the entire forest even more fragrant with its sweet aroma.

COMMENTARY

The presiding goddess of that liquor, Vāruṇī, the daughter of Varuṇa, flowed luxuriantly from a hole in the trunk of a *kadamba* tree (*vṛkṣa-koṭarāt*). According to *Śrī Hari-vaṁśa,* Vāruṇī said to Balarāma: *samīpaṁ preṣitā pitrā varuṇena tavānagha*, "My father, Varuṇa, has sent me to You, O sinless one."

Śrīdhara Svāmī says that *vāruṇī*, a type of liquor distilled from honey, arose along with the nectar of the demigods. The sweet aroma of the *vāruṇī* made the entire forest even more fragrant (*adhyavāsayat*).

|| 10.65.20 ||

taṁ gandhaṁ madhu-dhārāyā vāyunopahṛtaṁ balaḥ

āghrāyopagatas tatra lalanābhiḥ samaṁ papau

TRANSLATION

The wind carried to Balarāma the fragrance of that flood of sweet liquor, and when He smelled it He went [to the tree]. There He and His female companions drank.

|| 10.65.21 ||

upagīyamāno gandharvair vanitā-śobhi-maṇḍale

reme kareṇu-yūtheśo māhendra iva vāraṇaḥ

TRANSLATION

As the Gandharvas sang His glories, Lord Balarāma enjoyed within the brilliant circle of young women. He appeared just like Indra's elephant, the lordly Airāvata, enjoying in the company of she-elephants.

|| 10.65.22 ||

nedur dundubhayo vyomni vavṛṣuḥ kusumair mudā

gandharvā munayo rāmaṁ tad-vīryair īḍire tadā

TRANSLATION

At that time kettledrums resounded in the sky, the Gandharvas joyfully rained down flowers, and the great sages praised Lord Balarāma's heroic deeds.

|| 10.65.23 ||

upagīyamāna-carito vanitābhir halāyudha

vaneṣu vyacarat kṣīvo mada-vihvala-locanaḥ

TRANSLATION

As His deeds were sung, Lord Halāyudha wandered as if inebriated among the various forests with His girlfriends. His eyes rolled from the effects of the liquor.

|| 10.65.24-25 ||

sragvy eka-kuṇḍalo matto vaijayantyā ca mālayā

bibhrat smita-mukhāmbhojaṁ sveda-prāleya-bhūṣitam

sa ājuhāva yamunāṁ jala-krīḍārtham īśvaraḥ

nijaṁ vākyam anādṛtya matta ity āpagāṁ balaḥ

anāgatāṁ halāgreṇa kupito vicakarṣa ha

TRANSLATION

Intoxicated with joy, Lord Balarāma sported flower garlands, including the famous Vaijayantī. He wore a single earring, and beads of perspiration decorated His smiling lotus face like snowflakes. The Lord then summoned the Yamunā River so that He could play in her waters, but she disregarded His command, thinking He was drunk. This angered Balarāma, and He began dragging the river with the tip of His plow.

COMMENTARY

Beads of perspiration decorated Balarāma's smiling lotus face like snowflakes (*prāleya*). Yamunā did not respect Balarāma's words because she thought that the words of an intoxicated (*matta*) person have no authority. Therefore, she disregarded Him and did not come, thinking. "If Balarāma calls me, wanting to enjoy in my water, then let Him come to me."

|| 10.65.26 ||

pāpe tvaṁ mām avajñāya yan nāyāsi mayāhutā

neṣye tvāṁ lāṅgalāgreṇa śatadhā kāma-cāriṇīm

TRANSLATION

[Lord Balarāma said:] O sinful one disrespecting Me, you do not come when I call you but rather move only by your own whim. Therefore with the tip of My plow I shall bring you here in a hundred streams!

COMMENTARY

Balarāma said, "Because you did not answer My call (*āhutā*), I will divide you into a hundred streams with the tip of My plow."

|| 10.65.27 ||

evaṁ nirbhartsitā bhītā yamunā yadu-nandanam

uvāca cakitā vācaṁ patitā pādayor nṛpa

TRANSLATION

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Thus scolded by the Lord, O King, the frightened river-goddess Yamunā came and fell at the feet of Śrī Balarāma, the beloved descendant of Yadu. Trembling, she spoke to Him the following words.

COMMENTARY

The Yamunā, who appeared before Balarāma in the form of a river, is the wife of the ocean and an expansion of Kālindī (one of Kṛṣṇa's queens in Dvārakā), but she was not Kālindī herself. The Hari-vaṁśa confirms *pratyuvācārṇava-vadhūm*, "Goddess Yamunā is the wife of the ocean."

|| 10.65.28 ||

rāma rāma mahā-bāho na jāne tava vikramam

yasyaikāṁśena vidhṛtā jagatī jagataḥ pate

TRANSLATION

[Goddess Yamunā said:] Rāma, Rāma, O mighty-armed one! I know nothing of Your prowess. With a single portion of Yourself You hold up the earth, O Lord of the universe.

COMMENTARY

Goddess Yamunā said, "With a single portion of Your self (Śeṣa) You hold up the earth." The phrase *ekāṁśena* ("with a single portion") refers to the Balarāma's expansion as Śeṣa.

|| 10.65.29 ||

paraṁ bhāvaṁ bhagavato bhagavan māṁ ajānatīm

moktum arhasi viśvātman prapannāṁ bhakta-vatsala

TRANSLATION

My Lord, please release me. O soul of the universe, I didn't understand Your position as the Supreme Godhead, but now I have surrendered unto You, and You are always kind to Your devotees.

COMMENTARY

Yamunā said, "You should release me as I was ignorant of Your supreme status (*paraṁ bhāvaṁ*)." *Paraṁ bhāvaṁ* refers to Balarāma's original identity as Mahā-Saṅkarṣaṇa.

|| 10.65.30 ||

tato vyamuñcad yamunāṁ yācito bhagavān balaḥ

vijagāha jalaṁ strībhiḥ kareṇubhir ivebha-rāṭ

TRANSLATION

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Thereupon Lord Balarāma released the Yamunā and, like the king of the elephants with his entourage of she-elephants, entered the river's water with His female companions.

|| 10.65.31 ||

kāmaṁ vihṛtya salilād uttīrṇāyāsītāmbare

bhūṣaṇāni mahārhāṇi dadau kāntiḥ śubhāṁ srajam

TRANSLATION

The Lord played in the water to His full satisfaction, and when He came out Goddess Kānti presented Him with blue garments, precious ornaments and a brilliant necklace.

COMMENTARY

Kānti is a particular form of Goddess Lakṣmī, the consort of Balarāma's plenary expansion Saṅkarṣaṇa who belongs to the second *catur-vyūha* expansion. The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* states:

varuṇa-prahitā cāsmai mālām amlāna-paṅkajām

samudrābhe tathā vastre nīle lakṣmīr ayacchata

"Sent by Varuṇa, Goddess Lakṣmī then presented Balarāma with a garland of unfading lotuses and a pair of garments colored blue like the sea."

|| 10.65.32 ||

vasitvā vāsasī nīle mālāṁ āmucya kāñcanīm

reye sv-alaṅkṛto lipto māhendra iva vāraṇaḥ

TRANSLATION

Lord Balarāma dressed Himself in the blue garments and put on the gold necklace. Anointed with fragrances and beautifully adorned, He appeared as resplendent as Indra's royal elephant.

COMMENTARY

Anointed with sandalwood paste and other pure, fragrant substances, Balarāma resembled Airāvata, the great elephant (*vāraṇaḥ*) of Lord Indra.

|| 10.65.33 ||

adyāpi dṛśyate rājan yamunākṛṣṭa-vartmanā

balasyānanta-vīryasya vīryaṁ sūcayatīva hi

TRANSLATION

Even today, O King, one can see how the Yamunā flows through the many channels created when it was dragged by the unlimitedly powerful Lord Balarāma. Thus she demonstrates His prowess.

COMMENTARY

Even today Yamunā is marked with paths made by Balarāma's plow.

|| 10.65.34 ||

evaṁ sarvā niśā yātā ekeva ramato vraje

rāmasyākṣipta-cittasya mādhuryair vraja-yoṣitām

TRANSLATION

Thus for Lord Balarāma all the nights passed like a single night as He enjoyed in Vraja, His mind enchanted by the exquisite charm and beauty of Vraja's young ladies.

COMMENTARY

For Balarāma all the nights passed as if they were a single night (*sarvā niśā yātā ekeva*), since each night brought a completely new experience of joy in association with the beautiful damsels of Vraja.

Thus ends the commentary on the Sixty-fifth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Sixty-six

Pauṇḍraka, the False Vāsudeva

|| 10.66.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

nanda-vrajaṁ gate rāme karūṣādhipatir nṛpa

vāsudevo 'ham ity ajño dūtaṁ kṛṣṇāya prāhiṇot

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O King, while Lord Balarāma was away visiting Nanda's village of Vraja, the ruler of Karūṣa, foolishly thinking "I am the Supreme Lord, Vāsudeva," sent a messenger to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

In this chapter, Pauṇḍraka, the king of Karūṣa, show his powers in the name of Vāsudeva to cheat the people and sends a messenger to Dvārakā. Kṛṣṇa then annihilates Pauṇḍraka, kills his friend and his friend's son, and burns down the city of Kāśī with His disc.

Since Balarāma had gone to Vraja, Pauṇḍraka stupidly thought that Kṛṣṇa would be alone and therefore easy to challenge. Thus he dared to send the Lord his crazy message, “I am Vāsudeva.”

|| 10.66.2 ||

tvaṁ vāsudevo bhagavān avatīṛno jagat-patiḥ

iti prastobhito bālair mena ātmānam acyutam

TRANSLATION

Pauṇḍraka was emboldened by the flattery of childish men, who told him, “You are Vāsudeva, the Supreme Lord and master of the universe, who have now descended to the earth.” Thus he imagined himself to be the infallible Personality of Godhead.

COMMENTARY

Pauṇḍraka foolishly accepted the flattery (*prastobhitaḥ*) of ignorant persons, and thus considered himself the Supreme Lord.

|| 10.66.3 ||

dūtaṁ ca prāhiṇon mandaḥ kṛṣṇāyāvyakta-vartmane

dvārakāyāṁ yathā bālo nṛpo bāla-kṛto ’budhaḥ

TRANSLATION

Thus slow-witted King Pauṇḍraka sent a messenger to the inscrutable Lord Kṛṣṇa at Dvārakā. Pauṇḍraka was acting just like an unintelligent child whom other children are pretending is a king.

COMMENTARY

The reason Śukadeva Gosvāmī repeats here for the second time that Pauṇḍraka sent a message to Śrī Kṛṣṇa is that the great sage was astonished at Pauṇḍraka’s extreme foolishness. Pauṇḍraka was just like a child who is imagined to be a king by other children while playing.

|| 10.66.4 ||

dūtas tu dvārakām etya sabhāyām āsthitaṁ prabhum

kṛṣṇaṁ kamala-patrākṣaṁ rāja-sandeśam abravīt

TRANSLATION

Arriving in Dvārakā, the messenger found lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa in His royal assembly and relayed the King's message to that almighty Lord.

|| 10.66.5 ||

vāsudevo 'vatīrno 'ham eka eva na cāparaḥ

bhūtānām anukampārthaṁ tvaṁ tu mithyābhidhāṁ tyaja

TRANSLATION

[On Pauṇḍraka's behalf, the messenger said:] I am the one and only Lord Vāsudeva, and there is no other. It is I who have descended to this world to show mercy to the living beings. Therefore give up Your false name.

COMMENTARY

These verses relaying the message of Pauṇḍraka have another true meaning as revealed by Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning. In the word *avatīrṇaḥ* (descend) the prefix "*a*" has been deleted in accordance with a grammatical rule as pointed out by the authority named Bhāguri. Therefore, the negative "*na*" can also be omitted. Thus the meaning of Pauṇḍraka's statement is, "I am not Vāsudeva incarnate, but rather You alone and no one else are Vāsudeva. Since You have descended to show mercy to the living beings, please make me give up my false designation, which is like that of an oyster claiming to be silver." Complying with his request, Kṛṣṇa will say, "I will certainly make you give up your false designations (*abhidhām*)."

|| 10.66.6 ||

yāni tvam asmac-cihnāni mauḍhyād bibharṣi sātvata

tyaktvaihi māṁ tvaṁ śaraṇaṁ no ced dehi mamāhavam

TRANSLATION

O Sātvata, give up my personal symbols, which out of foolishness You now carry, and come to me for shelter. If You do not, then You must give me battle.

COMMENTARY

Goddess Sarasvatī has inspired the following interpretation of Pauṇḍraka's words. Pauṇḍraka said, "Out of foolishness I have assumed an imitation conchshell, disc, lotus and club, and You are maintaining these by allowing me to use them. It is unjust that You have not yet subdued me and removed these imitation symbols. As the giver of liberation, You are the shelter (*tvaṁ śaraṇaṁ*) and the protector from material existence of demons like ourselves. Therefore, please tight with me, take away these symbols, and mercifully grant me liberation by killing me."

|| 10.66.7 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

katthanaṁ tad upākarṇya pauṇḍrakasyālpa-medhasaḥ

ugrasenādayaḥ sabhyā uccakair jahasus tadā

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: King Ugrasena and the other members of the assembly laughed loudly when they heard this vain boasting of unintelligent Pauṇḍraka.

|| 10.66.8 ||

uvāca dūtaṁ bhagavān parihāsa-kathām anu

utsrakṣye mūḍha cihnāni yais tvam evaṁ vikatthase

TRANSLATION

The Personality of Godhead, after enjoying the jokes of the assembly, told the messenger [to relay a message to his master:] "You fool, I will indeed let loose the weapons you boast of in this way."

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “Oh fool, I will indeed let loose these weapons when we meet on the battlefield, and make you give up those symbols (*utsrakṣye*) by which you falsely glorify yourself. Or I will throw (*utsrakṣya*) My weapons such as the Sudarśana disc at you and at those with whom you are talking.” The Sanskrit word *utsrakṣye* means “I will hurl, throw, let loose and abandon.”

|| 10.66.9 ||

mukhaṁ tad apidhāyājña kaṅka-gṛdhra-vaṭair vṛtaḥ

śayiṣyase hatas tatra bhavitā śaraṇaṁ śunām

TRANSLATION

“When you lie dead, O fool, your face covered by vultures, herons and vaṭa birds, you will become the shelter of dogs.”

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “That face from which you are now speaking will be covered by meat-eating herons, vultures and *vaṭas* (birds similar to herons). At that time, instead of becoming My shelter as you have demanded, you will be eaten by these lowborn birds, and then your body will become the shelter of dogs who will eat it with great pleasure.”

|| 10.66.10 ||

iti dūtas tam ākṣepaṁ svāmine sarvam āharat

kṛṣṇo ’pi ratham āsthāya kāśīm upajagāma ha

TRANSLATION

When the Lord had thus spoken, the messenger conveyed His insulting reply to his master in its entirety. Lord Kṛṣṇa then mounted His chariot and went to the vicinity of Kāśī.

|| 10.66.11 ||

pauṇḍrako ’pi tad-udyogam upalabhya mahā-rathaḥ

akṣauhiṇībhyāṁ saṁyukto niścakrāma purād drutam

TRANSLATION

Upon observing Lord Kṛṣṇa's preparations for battle, the mighty warrior Pauṇḍraka quickly went out of the city with two full military divisions.

|| 10.66.12-14 ||

tasya kāśī-patir mitraṁ pārṣṇi-grāho 'nvayān nṛpa

akṣauhiṇībhis tisṛbhir apaśyat pauṇḍrakaṁ hariḥ

śaṅkhāry-asi-gadā-śārṅga- śrīvatsādy-upalakṣitam

bibhrāṇaṁ kaustubha-maṇiṁ vana-mālā-vibhūṣitam

kauśeya-vāsasī pīte vasānaṁ garuḍa-dhvajam

amūlya-mauly-ābharaṇaṁ sphuran-makara-kuṇḍalam

TRANSLATION

Pauṇḍraka's friend, the King of Kāśī, followed behind, O King, leading the rear guard with three akṣauhiṇī divisions. Lord Kṛṣṇa saw that Pauṇḍraka was carrying the Lord's own insignia, such as the conchshell, disc, sword and club, and also an imitation Śārṅga bow and Śrīvatsa mark. He wore a mock Kaustubha gem, was decorated with a garland of forest flowers and was dressed in upper and lower garments of fine yellow silk. His banner bore the image of Garuḍa, and he wore a valuable crown and gleaming, shark-shaped earrings.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa saw that Pauṇḍraka was wearing a cheap crown and imitation ornaments (*amūlya-mauly-ābharaṇaṁ*), and had the image of Garuḍa on his flag.

|| 10.66.15 ||

dṛṣṭvā tam ātmanas tulyaṁ veṣaṁ kṛtrimam āsthitam

yathā naṭaṁ raṅga-gataṁ vijahāsa bhṛśaṁ harīḥ

TRANSLATION

Lord Hari laughed heartily when He saw how the King had dressed up in exact imitation of His own appearance, just like an actor on a stage.

|| 10.66.16 ||

śulair gadābhiḥ parighaiḥ śakty-ṛṣṭi-prāsa-tomaraiḥ

asibhiḥ paṭṭiśair bāṇaiḥ prāharann arayo harim

TRANSLATION

The enemies of Lord Hari attacked Him with tridents, clubs, bludgeons, pikes, ṛṣtis, barbed darts, lances, swords, axes and arrows.

|| 10.66.17 ||

kṛṣṇas tu tat pauṇḍraka-kāśirājayor balaṁ gaja-syandana-vāji-patti-mat

gadāsi-cakreṣubhir ārdayad bhṛśaṁ yathā yugānte huta-bhuk pṛthak prajāḥ

TRANSLATION

But Lord Kṛṣṇa fiercely struck back at the army of Pauṇḍraka and Kāśirāja, which consisted of elephants, chariots, cavalry and infantry. The Lord tormented His enemies with His club, sword, Sudarśana disc and arrows, just as the fire of annihilation torments the various kinds of creatures at the end of a cosmic age.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa attacked them like the fire of annihilation (*huta bhuk*) attacks all types of living entities (*pṛthak prajāḥ*) without discrimination.

|| 10.66.18 ||

āyodhanaṁ tad ratha-vāji-kuñjara- dvipat-kharoṣṭrair ariṇāvakhaṇḍitaiḥ

babhau citaṁ moda-vahaṁ manasvinām ākrīḍanaṁ bhūta-pater ivolbaṇam

TRANSLATION

The battlefield, strewn with the dismembered chariots, horses, elephants, humans, mules and camels that had been cut to pieces by the Lord's disc weapon, shone like the gruesome playground of Lord Bhūtapati, giving pleasure to the wise.

COMMENTARY

The battlefield (*āyodhanaṁ:yuddha-sthānam*) appeared splendid strewn (*citaṁ*) with chariots and other objects by Kṛṣṇa's disc (*ariṇā*).

|| 10.66.19 ||

athāha pauṇḍrakaṁ śaurir bho bho pauṇḍraka yad bhavān

dūta-vākyena mām āha tāny astraṇy utsṛjāmi te

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa then addressed Pauṇḍraka: My dear Pauṇḍraka, the very weapons you spoke of through your messenger, I now release unto you.

|| 10.66.20 ||

tyājayiṣye 'bhidhānaṁ me yat tvayājña mṛṣā dhṛtam

vrajāmi śaranaṁ te 'dya yadi necchāmi saṁyugam

TRANSLATION

O fool, now I shall make you renounce My name, which you have falsely assumed. And I will certainly take shelter of you if I do not wish to fight you.

|| 10.66.21 ||

iti kṣiptvā śitair bāṇair virathī-kṛtya pauṇḍrakam

śiro 'vṛścad rathāṅgena vajreṇendro yathā gireḥ

TRANSLATION

Having thus derided Pauṇḍraka, Lord Kṛṣṇa destroyed his chariot with His sharp arrows. The Lord then cut off his head with the Sudarśana disc, just as Lord Indra lops off a mountain peak with his thunderbolt weapon.

|| 10.66.22 ||

tathā kāśī-pateḥ kāyāc chira utkṛtya patribhiḥ

nyapātayat kāśī-puryāṁ padma-kośam ivānilaḥ

TRANSLATION

With His arrows, Lord Kṛṣṇa similarly severed Kāśirāja's head from his body, sending it flying into Kāśī city like a lotus flower thrown by the wind.

COMMENTARY

Why did Kṛṣṇa throw Kāśīrāja's head into the city? The reason is as follows: As he went off to battle, the King of Kāśī had promised the citizens: "My dear residents of Kāśī, today I will bring the enemy's head into the midst of the city. Have no doubt of this." The King's sinful, proud queens had also boasted to their maidservants: "Today our master will certainly bring the head of the Lord of Dvārakā." For this reason the playful Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa threw the King's head into the city of Kāśī to astonish the inhabitants.

|| 10.66.23 ||

evaṁ matsariṇam hatvā pauṇḍrakaṁ sa-sakhaṁ hariḥ

dvārakām āviśat siddhair gīyamāna-kathāmṛtaḥ

TRANSLATION

Having thus killed envious Pauṇḍraka and his ally, Lord Kṛṣṇa returned to Dvārakā. As He entered the city, the Siddhas of heaven chanted His immortal, nectarean glories.

|| 10.66.24 ||

sa nityaṁ bhagavad-dhyāna- pradhvastākhila-bandhanaḥ

bibhrāṇaś ca hare rājan svarūpaṁ tan-mayo 'bhavat

TRANSLATION

By constantly meditating upon the Supreme Lord, Pauṇḍraka shattered all his material bonds. Indeed, by imitating Lord Kṛṣṇa's appearance, O King, he ultimately became Kṛṣṇa conscious.

COMMENTARY

By continually meditating (*nityaṁ bhagavad-dhyāna*) on the four-handed form of the Lord, Pauṇḍraka achieved *sārūpya-mukti* (*svarūpaṁ*) and was promoted to the Vaikuṇṭha planets, where the devotees have the same bodily features as Viṣṇu with four hands holding the four symbols (*śaṅkha, gadā, padma, cakra*).

|| 10.66.25 ||

śiraḥ patitam ālokya rāja-dvāre sa-kuṇḍalam

kim idaṁ kasya vā vaktram iti saṁśiśire janāḥ

TRANSLATION

Seeing a head decorated with earrings lying at the gate of the royal palace, the people present were puzzled. Some of them asked, "What is this?" and others said, "It is a head, but whose is it?"

COMMENTARY

First they asked "What is this?" and then they doubted, "Whose head is it?"

|| 10.66.26 ||

rājñaḥ kāśī-pater jñātvā mahiṣyaḥ putra-bāndhavāḥ

paurāś ca hā hatā rājan nātha nātheti prārudan

TRANSLATION

My dear King, when they recognized it as the head of their King—the lord of Kāśi—his queens, sons and other relatives, along with all the citizens of the city, began to cry pitifully: "Alas, we are killed! O my lord, my lord!"

|| 10.66.27-28 ||

sudakṣiṇas tasya sutaḥ kṛtvā saṁsthā-vidhiṁ pateḥ

nihatya pitṛ-hantāraṁ yāsyāmy apacitiṁ pituḥ

ity ātmanābhisandhāya sopādhyāyo maheśvaram

su-dakṣiṇo 'rcayām āsa parameṇa samādhinā

TRANSLATION

After the King's son Sudakṣiṇa had performed the obligatory funeral rituals for his father, he resolved within his mind: "Only by killing my father's murderer can I avenge his death." Thus the charitable Sudakṣiṇa, together with his priests, began worshiping Lord Maheśvara with great attention.

|| 10.66.29 ||

prīto 'vimukte bhagavāṁs tasmai varam adād vibhuḥ

pitṛ-hantṛ-vadhopāyaṁ sa vavre varam īpsitam

TRANSLATION

Satisfied by the worship, the powerful Lord Śiva appeared in the sacred precinct of Avimukta and offered Sudakṣiṇa his choice of benedictions. The prince chose as his benediction a means to slay his father's killer.

COMMENTARY

Mahādeva Śiva (*avimukta*) asked Sudakṣiṇa, the king's son, to choose a boon (*vavre varam*).

|| 10.66.30-31 ||

dakṣiṇāgniṁ paricara brāhmaṇaiḥ samam ṛtvijam

abhicāra-vidhānena sa cāgniḥ pramathair vṛtaḥ

sādhayiṣyati saṅkalpam abrahmaṇye prayojitaḥ

ity ādiṣṭas tathā cakre kṛṣṇāyābhicaran vratī

TRANSLATION

Lord Śiva told him, "Accompanied by brāhmaṇas, serve the Dakṣiṇāgni fire—the original priest—following the injunctions of the abhicāra ritual. Then the Dakṣiṇāgni fire, together with many Pramathas, will fulfill your desire if you direct it against someone inimical to the brāhmaṇas." So instructed, Sudakṣiṇa strictly observed the ritualistic vows and invoked the abhicāra against Lord Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

Lord Śiva said, "Serve the *dakṣiṇa-agnim* (the Dakṣiṇa fire), which is like the priest (*ṛtvijam*) who carries out rituals on his own behalf." This is confirmed in the *Rg Veda* (1.1.1): *yajñasya devam ṛtvijam*, "The fire is the *ṛtvijam* or lord of the sacrifice." When Śiva said the Daksināgni fire should only be used against one inimical to *brāhmaṇas*, he hinted that used against Kṛṣṇa, who maintains the *brāhmaṇas*, the fire would have the opposite effect. Hearing that *brāhmaṇas* offer obeisances to Kṛṣṇa, Sudakṣiṇa foolishly thought that since Kṛṣṇa was greedy for respect from the *brāhmaṇas*, that He had no respect for the *brāhmaṇas*.

|| 10.66.32-33 ||

tato 'gnir utthitaḥ kuṇḍānmūrtimān ati-bhīṣaṇaḥ

tapta-tāmra-śikhā-śmaśrur aṅgārodgāri-locanaḥ

daṁṣṭrogra-bhru-kuṭī-daṇḍa- kaṭhorāsyaḥ sva-jihvayā

ālihan sṛkvaṇī nagno vidhunvaṁs tri-śikhaṁ jvalat

TRANSLATION

Thereupon the fire rose up out of the altar pit, assuming the form of an extremely fearsome, naked person. The fiery creature's beard and tuft of hair were like molten copper, and his eyes emitted blazing hot cinders. His face

looked most frightful with its fangs and terrible arched and furrowed brows. As he licked the corners of his mouth with his tongue, the demon shook his flaming trident.

|| 10.66.34 ||

padbhyāṁ tāla-pramāṇābhyāṁ kampayann avanī-talam

so ’bhyadhāvad vṛto bhūtair dvārakāṁ pradahan diśaḥ

TRANSLATION

On legs as tall as palm trees, the monster raced toward Dvārakā in the company of ghostly spirits, shaking the ground and burning the world in all directions.

COMMENTARY

Turning towards Dvārakā, the fiery demon ran forward burning up the directions.

|| 10.66.35 ||

tam ābhicāra-dahanam āyāntaṁ dvārakaukasaḥ

vilokya tatrasuḥ sarve vana-dāhe mṛgā yathā

TRANSLATION

Seeing the approacḥ of the fiery demon created by the abhicāra ritual, the residents of Dvārakā were all struck with fear, like animals terrified by a forest fire.

COMMENTARY

Seeing him approaching from a distance, the residents of Dvārakā became frightened, like animals terrified by a forest fire.

|| 10.66.36 ||

akṣaiḥ sabhāyāṁ krīḍantaṁ bhagavantaṁ bhayāturāḥ

trāhi trāhi tri-lokeśa vahneḥ pradahataḥ puram

TRANSLATION

Distraught with fear, the people cried out to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who was then playing at dice in the royal court: "Save us! Save us, O Lord of the three worlds, from this fire burning up the city!"

COMMENTARY

They cried out, "Please save us! Please save us!"

|| 10.66.37 ||

śrutvā taj jana-vaiklavyaṁ dṛṣṭvā svānāṁ ca sādhvasam

śaraṇyaḥ samprahasyāha mā bhaiṣṭety avitāsmy aham

TRANSLATION

When Lord Kṛṣṇa heard the people's agitation and saw that even His own men were disturbed, that most worthy giver of shelter simply laughed and told them, "Do not fear; I shall protect you."

COMMENTARY

Seeing the bewilderment of the citizens of the city and the fear in its rulers, the Yādavas, who though His own men did not know the cause of that fire, Kṛṣṇa spoke.

|| 10.66.38 ||

sarvasyāntar-bahiḥ-sākṣī kṛtyāṁ māheśvarīṁ vibhuḥ

vijñāya tad-vighātārthaṁ pārśva-sthaṁ cakram ādiśat

TRANSLATION

The almighty Lord, the internal and external witness of all, understood that the monster had been produced by Lord Śiva from the sacrificial fire. To defeat the demon, Kṛṣṇa dispatched His disc weapon, who was waiting at His side.

COMMENTARY

Śrī Kṛṣṇa, playing the part of a king, was enjoying a gambling match and did not want to be disturbed by such an insignificant matter as the attack of a fiery demon. So Kṛṣṇa simply ordered His disc weapon to take the necessary steps.

|| 10.66.39 ||

tat sūrya-koṭi-pratimaṁ sudarśanaṁ jājvalyamānaṁ pralayānala-prabham

sva-tejasā khaṁ kakubho 'tha rodasī cakraṁ mukundāstraṁ athāgnim ārdayat

TRANSLATION

That Sudarśana, the disc weapon of Lord Mukunda, blazed forth like millions of suns. His effulgence blazed like the fire of universal annihilation, and with his heat he pained the sky, all the directions, heaven and earth, and also the fiery demon.

COMMENTARY

Spreading out through heaven and earth, Kṛṣṇa's Sudarśana *cakra* tormented (*ārdayat*) the fiery demon (*agnim*).

|| 10.66.40 ||

kṛtyānalaḥ pratihataḥ sa rathāṅga-pāṇer

astraujasā sa nṛpa bhagna-mukho nivṛttaḥ

vārāṇasīṁ parisametya sudakṣiṇaṁ taṁ

sartvig-janaṁ samadahat sva-kṛto 'bhicāraḥ.

TRANSLATION

Frustrated by the power of Lord Kṛṣṇa's weapon, O King, the fiery creature produced by black magic turned his face away and retreated. Created for violence, the demon then returned to Vārāṇasī, where he surrounded the city and then burned Sudakṣiṇa and his priests to death, even though Sudakṣiṇa was his creator.

|| 10.66.41 ||

cakraṁ ca viṣṇos tad-anupraviṣṭaṁ vārāṇasīṁ sāṭṭa-sabhālayāpaṇām

sa-gopurāṭṭālaka-koṣṭha-saṅkulāṁ sa-kośa-hasty-aśva-rathānna-śālinīm

TRANSLATION

Lord Viṣṇu's disc also entered Vārāṇasī, in pursuit of the fiery demon, and proceeded to burn the city to the ground, including all its assembly halls and residential palaces with raised porches, its numerous marketplaces, gateways, watchtowers, warehouses and treasuries, and all the buildings housing elephants, horses, chariots and grains.

|| 10.66.42 ||

dagdhvā vārāṇasīṁ sarvāṁ viṣṇoś cakraṁ sudarśanam

bhūyaḥ pārśvam upātiṣṭhat kṛṣṇasyākliṣṭa-karmaṇaḥ

TRANSLATION

After burning down the entire city of Vārāṇasī, Lord Viṣṇu's Sudarśana cakra returned to the side of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, whose actions are effortless.

|| 10.66.43 ||

ya enaṁ śrāvayen martya uttamaḥ-śloka-vikramam

samāhito vā śṛṇuyāt sarva-pāpaiḥ pramucyate

TRANSLATION

Any mortal who recounts this heroic pastime of Lord Uttamaḥ-śloka's, or who simply hears it attentively, will become freed from all sins.

Thus ends the commentary on the Sixty Sixth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the Bhāgavatam for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous ācāryas.

Chapter Sixty-seven

Lord Balarāma Slays Dvivida Gorilla

|| 10.67.1 ||

śrī-rājovāca

bhuyo 'haṁ śrotum icchāmi rāmasyādbhuta-karmaṇaḥ

anantasyāprameyasya yad anyat kṛtavān prabhuḥ

TRANSLATION

The glorious King Parīkṣit said: I wish to hear further about Śrī Balarāma, the unlimited and immeasurable Supreme Lord, whose activities are all astounding. What else did He do?

COMMENTARY

In this chapter, Baladeva enjoys with the Vraja-gopīs on Raivataka Mountain. When Dvivida disturbs this, Baladeva kills him.

Being fully absorbed in *kṛṣṇa-līlā*, Śukadeva Gosvāmī had skipped over some of Balarāma's pastimes. Therefore, Parīkṣit Mahārāja asked him this question hinting that he not proceed so fast. Balarāma's astonishing activities (*ādbhuta-karmaṇaḥ*) were such incidents as pulling the Yamunā River in order to take bath. Who else could do that? Because Balarāma is unlimited (*anantasya*), even Śukadeva cannot know His activities completely. Balarāma is called *aprameyasya* (immeasurable) because it is impossible for persons like Parīkṣit to fully know Him with their finite intelligence.

|| 10.67.2 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

narakasya sakhā kaścid dvivido nāma vānaraḥ

sugrīva-sacivaḥ so 'tha bhrātā maindasya vīryavān

TRANSLATION

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: There was an ape named Dvivida who was a friend of Narakāsura's. This powerful Dvivida, the brother of Mainda, had been instructed by King Sugrīva.

COMMENTARY

Narakāsura is described as the friend (*narakasya sakhā*) of Dvivida to show that though Dvivida was the minister of the great devotee Sugrīva and an associate of Lord Rāmacandra, he became corrupted by the bad association of Naraka and this caused *anarthas* to arise in him. This bad association was the reaction for an offense Dvivida had committed when he disrespected Lakṣmaṇa, due to being proud of his strength.

The Mainda and Dvivida mentioned here are actually the eternally liberated devotees addressed as attendant deities during the worship of Lord Rāmacandra. The Lord arranged their degradation to show the evil of the bad association that results from offending great personalities. Thus the falldown of Dvivida and Mainda can be compared to that of Jaya and Vijaya.

|| 10.67.3 ||

sakhyuḥ so 'pacitiṁ kurvan vānaro rāṣṭra-viplavam

pura-grāmākarān ghoṣān adahad vahnim utsṛjan

TRANSLATION

To avenge the death of his friend [Naraka], the ape Dvivida ravaged the land, setting fires that burned cities, villages, mines and cowherd dwellings.

COMMENTARY

To retaliate (*apacitiṁ*) the death of his friend Narakāsura, Dvivida burned down the cowherd villages in order to destroy Śrī Kṛṣṇa's flourishing kingdom.

|| 10.67.4 ||

kvacit sa śailān utpāṭya tair deśān samacūrṇayat

ānartān sutarām eva yatrāste mitra-hā hariḥ

TRANSLATION

Once Dvivida tore up a number of mountains and used them to devastate all the neighboring kingdoms, especially the province of Ānarta, wherein dwelt his friend's killer, Lord Hari.

|| 10.67.5 ||

kvacit samudra-madhya-stho dorbhyām utkṣipya taj-jalam

deśān nāgāyuta-prāṇo velā-kūle nyamajjayat

TRANSLATION

Another time he entered the ocean and, with the strength of ten thousand elephants, churned up its water with his arms and thus submerged the coastal regions.

COMMENTARY

Dvivida flooded the coastal regions (*velā-kūle*) by fiercely churning the seawaler with his mighty arms.

|| 10.67.6 ||

āśramān ṛṣi-mukhyānāṁ kṛtvā bhagna-vanaspatīn

adūṣayac chakṛn-mūtrair agnīn vaitānikān khalaḥ

TRANSLATION

The wicked ape tore down the trees in the hermitages of exalted sages and contaminated their sacrificial fires with his feces and urine.

|| 10.67.7 ||

puruṣān yoṣito dṛptaḥ kṣmābhṛd-dronī-guhāsu saḥ

nikṣipya cāpyadhāc chailaiḥ peśaṣkārīva kīṭakam

TRANSLATION

Just as a wasp imprisons smaller insects, he arrogantly threw both men and women into caves in a mountain valley and sealed the caves shut with boulders.

COMMENTARY

He sealed (*apyadhāt*) the opening of the caves with stones.

|| 10.67.8 ||

evaṁ deśān viprakurvan dūṣayaṁś ca kula-striyaḥ

śrutvā su-lalitaṁ gītaṁ giriṁ raivatakaṁ yayau

TRANSLATION

Once, while Dvivida was thus engaged in harassing the neighboring kingdoms and polluting women of respectable families, he heard very sweet singing coming from Raivataka Mountain. So he went there.

|| 10.67.9-10 ||

tatrāpaśyad yadu-patiṁ rāmaṁ puṣkara-mālinam

sudarśanīya-sarvāṅgaṁ lalanā-yūtha-madhya-gam

gāyantaṁ vāruṇīṁ pītvā mada-vihvala-locanam

vibhrājamānaṁ vapuṣā prabhinnam iva vāraṇam

TRANSLATION

There he saw Śrī Balarāma, the Lord of the Yadus, adorned with a garland of lotuses and appearing most attractive in every limb. He was singing amidst a crowd of young women, and since He had drunk vāruṇī liquor, His eyes rolled as if He were intoxicated. His body shone brilliantly as He behaved like an elephant in rut.

COMMENTARY

He saw Balarāma fuming like a mad elephant.

|| 10.67.11 ||

duṣṭaḥ śākhā-mṛgaḥ śākhām ārūḍhaḥ kampayan drumān

cakre kilakilā-śabdam ātmānaṁ sampradarśayan

TRANSLATION

The mischievous ape climbed a tree branch and then revealed his presence by shaking the trees and making the sound kilakilā.

|| 10.67.12 ||

tasya dhārṣṭyaṁ kaper vīkṣya taruṇyo jāti-cāpalāḥ

hāsya-priyā vijahasur baladeva-parigrahāḥ

TRANSLATION

When Lord Baladeva's consorts saw the ape's impudence, they began to laugh. They were, after all, young girls who were fond of joking and prone to silliness.

COMMENTARY

By nature (*jāti:svabhāvena*) the young ladies accompanying Balarāma were not very serious (*cāpalāḥ*). Being fond of joking, they laughed loudly at the monkey's impudence.

|| 10.67.13 ||

tā helayām āsa kapir bhrū-kṣepair sammukhādibhiḥ

darśayan sva-gudaṁ tāsāṁ rāmasya ca nirīkṣitaḥ

TRANSLATION

Even as Lord Balarāma looked on, Dvivida insulted the girls by making odd gestures with his eyebrows, coming right in front of them, and showing them his anus.

COMMENTARY

He ridiculed (*helayām āsa*) the ladies by walking in a funny way, moving his eyebrows, making odd gestures, standing directly in front of them and urinating. He disrespected Balarāma by not even glancing at Him.

|| 10.67.14-15 ||

taṁ grāvṇā prāharat kruddho balaḥ praharatāṁ varaḥ

sa vañcayitvā grāvāṇaṁ madirā-kalaśaṁ kapiḥ

gṛhītvā helayām āsa dhūrtas taṁ kopayan hasan

nirbhidya kalaśaṁ duṣṭo vāsāṁsy āsphālayad balam

kadarthī-kṛtya balavān vipracakre madoddhataḥ

TRANSLATION

Angered, Lord Balarāma, the best of fighters, hurled a rock at him, but the cunning ape dodged the rock and grabbed the Lord's pot of liquor. Further infuriating Lord Balarāma by laughing and by ridiculing Him, wicked Dvivida

then broke the pot and offended the Lord even more by pulling at the girls' clothing. Thus the powerful ape, puffed up with false pride, continued to insult Śrī Balarāma.

COMMENTARY

He insulted (*vipracakre*) the ladies by pulling the garments off their beds and ripping them.

|| 10.67.16 ||

taṁ tasyāvinayaṁ dṛṣṭvā deśāṁś ca tad-upadrutān

kruddho muṣalam ādatta halaṁ cāri-jighāṁsayā

TRANSLATION

Lord Balarāma saw the ape's rude behavior and thought of the disruptions he had created in the surrounding kingdoms. Thus the Lord angrily took up His club and His plow weapon, having decided to put His enemy to death.

|| 10.67.17 ||

dvivido 'pi mahā-vīryaḥ śālam udyamya pāṇinā

abhyetya tarasā tena balaṁ mūrdhany atāḍayat

TRANSLATION

Mighty Dvivida also came forward to do battle. Uprooting a śāla tree with one hand, he rushed toward Balarāma and struck Him on the head with the tree trunk.

|| 10.67.18 ||

taṁ tu saṅkarṣaṇo mūrdhni patantam acalo yathā

pratijagrāha balavān sunandenāhanac ca tam

TRANSLATION

But Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa remained as motionless as a mountain and simply grabbed the log as it fell upon His head. He then struck Dvivida with His club, named Sunanda.

COMMENTARY

Balarāma struck him with His *mūṣala* (pestle or club) called Sunanda.

|| 10.67.19-21 ||

mūṣalāhata-mastiṣko vireje rakta-dhārayā

girir yathā gairikayā prahāraṁ nānucintayan

punar anyaṁ samutkṣipya kṛtvā niṣpatram ojasā

tenāhanat su-saṅkruddhas taṁ balaḥ śatadhācchinat

tato ’nyena ruṣā jaghne taṁ cāpi śatadhācchinat

TRANSLATION

Struck on the skull by the Lord’s club, Dvivida became brilliantly decorated by the outpour of blood, like a mountain beautified by red oxide. Ignoring the wound, Dvivida uprooted another tree, stripped it of leaves by brute force and struck the Lord again. Now enraged, Lord Balarāma shattered the tree into hundreds of pieces, upon which Dvivida grabbed yet another tree and furiously hit the Lord again. This tree, too, the Lord smashed into hundreds of pieces.

COMMENTARY

Balarāma struck him on a particular part of the head (*mastika*). *Gairikayā* means “with a red oxide” and *nānucintayan* means “not taking seriously.”

|| 10.67.22 ||

evaṁ yudhyan bhagavatā bhagne bhagne punaḥ punaḥ

ākṛṣya sarvato vṛkṣān nirvṛkṣam akarod vanam

TRANSLATION

Thus fighting the Lord, who again and again demolished the trees He was attacked with, Dvivida kept on uprooting trees from all sides until the forest was left treeless.

|| 10.67.23 ||

tato 'muñcac chilā-varṣaṁ balasyopary amarṣitaḥ

tat sarvaṁ cūrṇayāṁ āsa līlayā muṣalāyudhaḥ

TRANSLATION

The angry ape then released a rain of stones upon Lord Balarāma, but the wielder of the club easily pulverized them all.

|| 10.67.24 ||

sa bāhū tāla-saṅkāśau muṣṭī-kṛtya kapīśvaraḥ

āsādya rohiṇī-putraṁ tābhyāṁ vakṣasy arūrujat

TRANSLATION

Dvivida, the most powerful of apes, now clenched his fists at the end of his palm-tree-sized arms, came before Lord Balarāma and beat his fists against the Lord's body.

COMMENTARY

Dvivida beat (*arūrujat*) Balarāma with his fists (*muṣṭī-kṛtya*).

|| 10.67.25 ||

yādavendro 'pi taṁ dorbhyāṁ tyaktvā muṣala-lāṅgale

jatrāv abhyardayat kruddhaḥ so 'patad rudhiraṁ vaman

TRANSLATION

The furious Lord of the Yādavas then threw aside His club and plow and with His bare hands hammered a blow upon Dvivida's collarbone. The ape collapsed, vomiting blood.

COMMENTARY

Since Dvivida was striking Him with his hands, Balarāma did not strike him back with His weapons like the club or plow. Simply with His fists Balarāma crushed the gorilla's collarbone and killed him.

|| 10.67.26 ||

cakampe tena patatā sa-ṭaṅkaḥ sa-vanaspatiḥ

parvataḥ kuru-śārdūla vāyunā naur ivāmbhasi

TRANSLATION

When he fell, O tiger among the Kurus, Raivataka Mountain shook, along with its cliffs and trees, like a wind-tossed boat at sea.

COMMENTARY

Raivataka Mountain began to shake along with its trees, cliffs and fissures. According to Amarasimha's Trikanda dictionary, the word *ṭaṅka* means leg, mountain cliff, shovel, a stone-cutting chisel, or the wood apple fruit."

|| 10.67.27 ||

jaya-śabdo namaḥ-śabdaḥ sādhu sādhv iti cāmbare

sura-siddha-munīndrāṇām āsīt kusuma-varṣiṇām

TRANSLATION

In the heavens the demigods, perfect mystics and great sages cried out, "Victory to You! Obeisances to You! Excellent! Well done!" and showered flowers upon the Lord.

|| 10.67.28 ||

evaṁ nihatya dvividaṁ jagad-vyatikarāvaham

saṁstūyamāno bhagavān janaiḥ sva-puram āviśat

TRANSLATION

Having thus killed Dvivida, who had disturbed the whole world, the Supreme Lord returned to His capital as the people along the way chanted His glories.

Thus ends the commentary on the Sixty-Seventh Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

The Marriage of Sāmba

|| 10.68.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

duryodhana-sutāṁ rājan lakṣmaṇāṁ samitiṁ-jayaḥ

svayaṁvara-sthām aharat sāmbo jāmbavatī-sutaḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O King, Jāmbavatī's son Sāmba, ever victorious in battle, kidnapped Duryodhana's daughter Lakṣmaṇā from her svayaṁ-vara ceremony.

COMMENTARY

In this chapter, Sāmba abducts Lakṣmaṇā, the daughter of Duryodhana, during her marriage ceremony. When the Kurus arrest Sāmba, Balarāma becomes angered by their harsh words, and drags the city of Hastināpura toward the Gaṅgā.

|| 10.68.2 ||

kauravāḥ kupitā ūcur durvinīto 'yam arbhakaḥ

kadarthī-kṛtya naḥ kanyām akāmām aharad balāt

TRANSLATION

The angry Kurus said: This ill-behaved boy has offended us, forcibly kidnapping our unmarried daughter against her will.

|| 10.68.3 ||

badhnītemaṁ durvinītaṁ kiṁ kariṣyanti vṛṣṇayaḥ

ye ’smat-prasādopacitāṁ dattāṁ no bhuñjate mahīm

TRANSLATION

Arrest this ill-behaved Sāmba! What will the Vṛṣṇis do? By our grace they are ruling land that we have granted them.

COMMENTARY

The Yādavas enjoy the land given by us. They are not kings.

|| 10.68.4 ||

nigṛhītaṁ sutaṁ śrutvā yady eṣyantīha vṛṣṇayaḥ

bhagna-darpāḥ śamaṁ yānti prāṇā iva su-saṁyatāḥ

TRANSLATION

If the Vṛṣṇis come here when they learn that their son has been captured, we will break their pride. Thus they’ll become subdued, like bodily senses brought under strict control.

COMMENTARY

They will become peaceful like controlled senses (*prāṇā*).

|| 10.68.5 ||

iti karṇaḥ śalo bhūrir yajñaketuḥ suyodhanaḥ

sāmbam ārebhire yoddhuṁ kuru-vṛddhānumoditāḥ

TRANSLATION

After saying this and having their plan sanctioned by the senior member of the Kuru dynasty, Karṇa, Śala, Bhūri, Yajñaketu and Suyodhana set out to attack Sāmba.

COMMENTARY

Somadatta had three sons: Śala, Bhūri and Bhurīśvara, also called Yajñaketu. These three went with Karṇa and Duryodhana. Bhīṣma (*kuru-vṛddha*) gave them permission: “Since Sāmba has touched this maiden already, he must be the husband, for it would be improper to marry her to anyone else. To show our bravery and his impropriety however, we should capture him but not kill him.” Bhīṣma together with these six bound up Sāmba.

|| 10.68.6 ||

dṛṣṭvānudhāvataḥ sāmbo dhārtarāṣṭrān mahā-rathaḥ

pragṛhya ruciraṁ cāpaṁ tasthau siṁha ivaikalaḥ

TRANSLATION

Seeing Duryodhana and his companions rushing toward him, Sāmba, the great chariot-fighter, took up his splendid bow and stood alone like a lion.

|| 10.68.7 ||

taṁ te jighṛkṣavaḥ kruddhās tiṣṭha tiṣṭheti bhāṣiṇaḥ

āsādya dhanvino bāṇaiḥ karṇāgraṇyaḥ samākiran

TRANSLATION

Determined to capture him, the angry bowmen led by Karṇa shouted at Sāmba, ‘Stand and fight! Stand and fight!’ They came straight for him and showered him with arrows.

COMMENTARY

Sāmba was covered completely (*samākiran*) with arrows.

|| 10.68.8 ||

so ’paviddhaḥ kuru-śreṣṭha kurubhir yadu-nandanaḥ

nāmṛṣyat tad acintyārbhaḥ siṁha kṣudra-mṛgair iva

TRANSLATION

O best of the Kurus, as Kṛṣṇa's son Sāmba was being unjustly harassed by the Kurus, that darling of the Yadu dynasty did not tolerate their attack, any more than a lion would tolerate an attack by puny animals.

COMMENTARY

The child of the Supreme Lord (*acintaysa arbhaḥ*) did not tolerate being struck so unjustly (*apaviddha*).

|| 10.68. 9-10 ||

visphūrjya ruciraṁ cāpaṁ sarvān vivyādha sāyakaiḥ

karṇādīn ṣaḍ rathān vīras tāvadbhir yugapat pṛthak

caturbhiś caturo vāhān ekaikena ca sārathīn

rathinaś ca maheṣvāsāṁs tasya tat te 'bhyapūjayan

TRANSLATION

Twanging his wonderful bow, heroic Sāmba struck with arrows the six warriors headed by Karṇa. He pierced the six chariots with as many arrows, each team of four horses with four arrows, and each chariot driver with a single arrow, and he similarly struck the great bowmen who commanded the chariots. The enemy warriors congratulated Sāmba for this display of prowess.

COMMENTARY

Sāmba killed the four horses of each chariot with four arrows. The enemy praised him for this act.

|| 10.68.11 ||

taṁ tu te virathaṁ cakruś catvāraś caturo hayān

ekas tu sārathiṁ jaghne cicchedaṇyaḥ śarāsanam

TRANSLATION

But they forced him down from his chariot, and thereupon four of them struck his four horses, one of them struck down his chariot driver, and another broke his bow.

|| 10.68.12 ||

taṁ baddhvā virathī-kṛtya kṛcchreṇa kuravo yudhi

kumāraṁ svasya kanyāṁ ca sva-puraṁ jayino 'viśan

TRANSLATION

Having deprived Sāmba of his chariot during the fight, the Kuru warriors tied him up with great difficulty and then returned victorious to their city, taking the young boy and their princess.

COMMENTARY

They entered the city after seizing the boy and the girl.

|| 10.68.13 ||

tac chrutvā nāradoktena rājan sañjāta-manyavaḥ

kurūn praty udyamaṁ cakrur ugrasena-pracoditāḥ

TRANSLATION

O King, when the Yādavas heard news of this from Śrī Nārada, they became angry. Urged on by King Ugrasena, they prepared for war against the Kurus.

|| 10.68.14-15 ||

sāntvayitvā tu tān rāmaḥ sannaddhān vṛṣṇi-puṅgavān

naicchat kurūṇāṁ vṛṣṇīnāṁ kaliṁ kali-malāpahaḥ

jagāma hāstina-puraṁ rathenāditya-varcasā

brāhmaṇaiḥ kula-vṛddhaiś ca vṛtaś candra iva grahaiḥ

TRANSLATION

Lord Balarāma, however, cooled the tempers of the Vṛṣṇi heroes, who had already put on their armor. He who purifies the age of quarrel did not want a quarrel between the Kurus and Vṛṣṇis. Thus, accompanied by brāhmaṇas and family elders, He went to Hastināpura on His chariot, which was as effulgent as the sun. As He went, He appeared like the moon surrounded by the ruling planets.

COMMENTARY

Having pacified the Vṛṣṇis, Balarāma along with a group of *brāhmaṇas* and elders went to Hastināpura because He did not want a quarrel between the Kauravas and Vṛṣṇis.

|| 10.68.16 ||

gatvā gajāhvayaṁ rāmo bāhyopavanam āsthitaḥ

uddhavaṁ preṣayām āsa dhṛtarāṣṭraṁ bubhutsayā

TRANSLATION

Upon arriving at Hastināpura, Lord Balarāma remained in a garden outside the city and sent Uddhava ahead to probe King Dhṛtarāṣṭra's intentions.

COMMENTARY

Balarāma sent Uddhava to learn the intentions of Dhṛtarāṣṭra.

|| 10.68.17 ||

so 'bhivandyāmbikā-putraṁ bhīṣmaṁ droṇaṁ ca bāhlikam

duryodhanaṁ ca vidhi-vad rāmam āgataṁ abravīt

TRANSLATION

After he had offered proper respects to the son of Ambikā [Dhṛtarāṣṭra] and to Bhīṣma, Droṇa, Bāhlika and Duryodhana, Uddhava informed them that Lord Balarāma had arrived.

COMMENTARY

Since there is no mention of Uddhava offering respects to Yudhiṣṭhira and the other Pāṇḍavas, it is understood that they were now living in Indraprastha.

|| 10.68.18 ||

te 'ti-prītās tam ākarṇya prāptaṁ rāmaṁ suhṛt-tamam

tam arcayitvābhiyayuḥ sarve maṅgala-pāṇayaḥ

TRANSLATION

Overjoyed to hear that Balarāma, their dearmost friend, had come, they first honored Uddhava and then went forth to meet the Lord, carrying auspicious offerings in their hands.

COMMENTARY

They welcomed Uddhava (*tam arcayitvā*) and then went to meet Balarāma.

|| 10.68.19 ||

taṁ saṅgamya yathā-nyāyaṁ gām arghyaṁ ca nyavedayan

teṣāṁ ye tat-prabhāva-jñāḥ praṇemuḥ śirasā balam

TRANSLATION

They approached Lord Balarāma and worshiped Him with gifts of cows and arghya, as was fitting. Those among the Kurus who understood His true power bowed down to Him, touching their heads to the ground.

COMMENTARY

Those among them such as Bhīṣma, who knew Balarāma's power, offered their respects by bowing down.

|| 10.68.20 ||

bandhūn kuśalinaḥ śrutvā pṛṣṭvā śivam anāmayam

parasparam atho rāmo babhāṣe 'viklavaṁ vacaḥ

TRANSLATION

After both parties had heard that their relatives were doing well and both had inquired into each other's welfare and health, Lord Balarāma forthrightly spoke to the Kurus as follows.

COMMENTARY

Both sides heard and asked about each other's welfare.

|| 10.68.21 ||

ugrasenaḥ kṣiteśeśo yad va ājñāpayat prabhuḥ

tad avyagra-dhiyaḥ śrutvā kurudhvam avilambitam

TRANSLATION

[Lord Balarāma said:] King Ugrasena is our master and the ruler of kings. With undivided attention you should hear what he has ordered you to do, and then you should do it at once.

COMMENTARY

Balarāma said, "You are kings but Ugrasena is the ruler of everyone (*kṣita-īśa*). Why? Because he is the master (*prabhu*), whose order even Indra and others carry out, offering him tribute in the form of the Sudharmā hall and the *pārijāta* tree. Yayāti forbade the Yadus from being kings, but he did not forbid them from being rulers of kings. You should listen carefully to his order, otherwise he will punish you."

|| 10.68.22 ||

yad yūyaṁ bahavas tv ekaṁ jitvādharmeṇa dhārmikam

abadhnītātha tan mṛṣye bandhūnām aikya-kāmyayā

TRANSLATION

[King Ugrasena has said:] Even though by irreligious means several of you defeated a single opponent who follows the religious codes, still I am tolerating this for the sake of unity among family members.

COMMENTARY

Ugrasena speaks in this verse. "I am tolerating that you unjustly defeated Sāmba." His meaning is: "Therefore you should immediately bring him forward and give him back." He did not complete this statement however, because just on hearing it the opposing side would utter foul words.

|| 10.68.23 ||

vīrya-śaurya-balonnaddham ātma-śakti-samaṁ vacaḥ

kuravo baladevasya niśamyocuḥ prakopitāḥ

TRANSLATION

Upon hearing these words of Lord Baladeva's, which were full of potency, courage and strength and were appropriate to His transcendental power, the Kauravas became furious and spoke as follows.

COMMENTARY

They became angry upon hearing Balarāma's words, which were filled with influence (*vīrya*), courage (*śaurya*) and strength (*balam*), befitting His transcendental position.

|| 10.68.24 ||

aho mahac citram idaṁ kāla-gatyā duratyayā

ārurukṣaty upānad vai śiro mukuṭa-sevitam

TRANSLATION

[The Kuru nobles said:] Oh, how amazing this is! The force of time is indeed insurmountable: a lowly shoe now wants to climb on the head that bears the royal crown.

COMMENTARY

The Kuru leaders said, "How astonishing! Just see the insurmounta-ble movement of time (*kāla-gatyā duratyayā*)! Now the shoe wants to climb on the head that bears the royal crown." In other words, they thought that the lowly Yadus now wanted to rise above the royal Kurus.

|| 10.68.25 ||

ete yaunena sambaddhāḥ saha-śayyāsanāśanāḥ

vṛṣṇayas tulyatāṁ nītā asmad-datta-nṛpāsanāḥ

TRANSLATION

It is because these Vṛṣṇis are bound to us by marital ties that we have granted them equality, allowing them to share our beds, seats and meals. Indeed, it is we who have given them their royal thrones.

COMMENTARY

They are related to us only by the marriage of Kunti to Pāṇdu. Therefore, they are only brothers-in-law.

|| 10.68.26 ||

cāmara-vyajane śaṅkham ātapatraṁ ca pāṇḍuram

kirīṭam āsanaṁ śayyāṁ bhuñjate 'smad-upekṣayā

TRANSLATION

Only because we looked the other way could they enjoy the pair of yak-tail fans and the conchshell, white umbrella, throne, and royal bed.

COMMENTARY

The Kurus thought, “Showing concern about their use of these items of royalty would have been a sign of respect, but in fact we do not have such respect for them. Since they are of inferior families, they are not to be respected, and therefore we pay no reeard to them.”

|| 10.68.27 ||

alaṁ yadūnāṁ naradeva-lāñchanair dātuḥ pratīpaiḥ phaṇināṁ ivāmṛtam

ye ’smat-prasādopacitā hi yādavā ājñāpayanty adya gata-trapā bata

TRANSLATION

No longer should the Yadus be allowed to use these royal symbols, which now cause trouble for those who gave them, like milk fed to poisonous snakes. Having prospered by our grace, these Yādavas have now lost all shame and are daring to command us!

COMMENTARY

In this verse they state that they should no longer ignore their offenses. “We shall take away their royal symbols.”

|| 10.68.28 ||

katham indro ’pi kurubhir bhīṣma-droṇārjunādibhiḥ

adattam avarundhīta siṁha-grastam ivoraṇaḥ

TRANSLATION

How would even Indra dare usurp anything that Bhīṣma, Droṇa, Arjuna or the other Kurus have not given him? It would be like a lamb claiming the lion’s kill.

COMMENTARY

“O Yādavas! As you proudly think yourselves favored by Indra, then please listen. How can Indra dare take anything which is not given by the Kauravas? He is like a sheep in comparison to a lion. If Indra is like a sheep, what are you?”

|| 10.68.29 ||

śrī-bādarāyaṇir uvāca

janma-bandhu-śrīyonnaddha- madās te bharatarṣabha

āśrāvya rāmaṁ durvācyam asabhyāḥ puram āviśan

TRANSLATION

Śrī Bādarāyaṇi said: O best of the Bhāratas, after the arrogant Kurus, thoroughly puffed up by the opulence of their high birth and relations, had spoken these harsh words to Lord Balarāma, they turned and went back to their city.

COMMENTARY

Being intoxicated over their high birth and wealth, Bhīṣma and other relatives spoke so harshly to Balarāma.

|| 10.68.30 ||

dṛṣṭvā kurūnāṁ dauḥśīlyaṁ śrutvāvācyāni cācyutaḥ

avocat kopa-saṁrabdho duṣprekṣyaḥ prahasan muhuḥ

TRANSLATION

Seeing the bad character of the Kurus and hearing their nasty words, the infallible Lord Balarāma became filled with rage. His countenance frightful to behold, He laughed repeatedly and spoke as follows.

COMMENTARY

In this circumstance Balarāma thought, “Let them say and do what they want” but remained silent. After the Kauravas left however, Balarāma, in the presence of the city people, said and did what He wanted by showing His anger (*kopa-saṁrabdho*).

|| 10.68.31 ||

nūnaṁ nānā-madonnaddhāḥ śāntiṁ necchanty asādhavaḥ

teṣāṁ hi praśamo daṇḍaḥ paśūnāṁ laguḍo yathā

TRANSLATION

[Lord Balarāma said:] “Clearly the many passions of these scoundrels have made them so proud that they do not want peace. Then let them be pacified by physical punishment, as animals are with a stick.”

COMMENTARY

Balarāma said, “Because the Kauravas [Kurus] are puffed-up due to their wealth and other assets, only physical punishment (*daṇḍaḥ*) will pacify (*praśamaḥ*) their pride. *Sāma, dāna* and other forms of negotiation will not work.”

|| 10.68.32-33 ||

aho yadūn su-saṁrabdhān kṛṣṇaṁ ca kupitaṁ śanaiḥ

sāntvayitvāham eteṣāṁ śamam icchann ihāgataḥ

ta ime manda-matayaḥ kalahābhiratāḥ khalāḥ

taṁ mām avajñāya muhur durbhāṣān mānino ’bruvan

TRANSLATION

“Ah, only gradually was I able to calm the furious Yadus and Lord Kṛṣṇa, who was also enraged. Desiring peace for these Kauravas, I came here. But they are so dull-headed, fond of quarrel and mischievous by nature that they have repeatedly disrespected Me. Out of conceit they dared to address Me with harsh words!”

COMMENTARY

Balarāma said, “Although I am famous as their well-wisher, they have insulted Me with bad words.”

|| 10.68.34 ||

nograsenaḥ kila vibhur bhoja-vṛṣṇy-andhakeśvaraḥ

śakrādayo loka-pālā yasyādeśānuvartinaḥ

TRANSLATION

“King Ugrasena, the lord of the Bhojas, Vṛṣṇis and Andhakas, is not fit to command, when Indra and other planetary rulers obey his orders?”

COMMENTARY

In six verses (34-39) Balarāma remembers their foul words.

|| 10.68.35 ||

sudharmākramyate yena pārijāto 'marāṅghripaḥ

ānīya bhujyate so 'sau na kilādhyāsanārhaṇaḥ

TRANSLATION

"That same Kṛṣṇa who occupies the Sudharmā assembly hall and for His enjoyment took the pārijāta tree from the immortal demigods —that very Kṛṣṇa is indeed not fit to sit on a royal throne?"

COMMENTARY

Here Balarāma angrily states, "Never mind these audacious Yadus—these rascal Kauravas even dare to insult Kṛṣṇa! Is Kṛṣṇa not even fit for the king's throne?" Balarāma states this in three verses.

|| 10.68.36 ||

yasya pāda-yugaṁ sākṣāc chrīr upāste 'khileśvarī

sa nārhati kila śrīśo naradeva-paricchadān

TRANSLATION

"The goddess of fortune herself, ruler of the entire universe, worships His feet. And the master of the goddess of fortune does not deserve the paraphernalia of a mortal king?"

|| 10.68.37 ||

yasyāṅghri-paṅkaja-raja 'khila-loka-pālair

mauly-uttamair dhṛtam upāsita-tīrtha-tīrtham

brahmā bhavo 'ham api yasya kalāḥ kalāyāḥ

śrīś codvahema ciram asya nṛpāsanaṁ kva

TRANSLATION

"The dust of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, which is the source of holiness for all places of pilgrimage, is worshiped by all the great demigods. The principal deities of all

planets are engaged in His service, and they consider themselves most fortunate to take the dust of the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa on their crowns. Great demigods like Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva, and even the goddess of fortune and I, are simply parts of His spiritual identity, and we also carefully carry that dust on our heads. And still Kṛṣṇa is not fit to use the royal insignia or even sit on the royal throne?"

COMMENTARY

Balarāma said, "The dust of Kṛṣṇa's feet, which is a place of pilgrimage (*tīrtha*) for the masters of *yoga* who themselves are personified *tīrthas*, is held on the costly crowns of all the planetary rulers. Brahmā, your creator, whose power is greater than Indra and Śiva, and even I, what to speak of Lakṣmī, the Lord's internal potency who possesses more opulence than all of us put together, are all just expansions of Kṛṣṇa or expansions of His expansions. Yet all of us carefully carry the dust of Kṛṣṇa's feet on our heads. Still to obtain His throne Kṛṣṇa must beg the Kauravas for their mercy." This is a sarcastic statement.

|| 10.68.38 ||

bhuñjate kurubhir dattaṁ bhū-khaṇḍaṁ vṛṣṇayaḥ kila

upānahaḥ kila vayaṁ svayaṁ tu kuravaḥ śiraḥ

TRANSLATION

"We Vṛṣṇis enjoy only whatever small parcel of land the Kurus allow us? And we are indeed shoes, whereas the Kurus are the head?"

|| 10.68.39 ||

aho aiśvarya-mattānāṁ mattānām iva māninām

asambaddhā giro rukṣāḥ kaḥ sahetānuśāsitā

TRANSLATION

"Just see how these puffed-up Kurus are intoxicated with their so-called power, like ordinary drunken men! What actual ruler, with the power to command, would tolerate their foolish, nasty words?"

COMMENTARY

Having joked with sarcastic words, Balarāma now speaks the facts in one and a half verses: "What punisher such as Myself can tolerate such rough, inappropriate words from proud people bewildered by their power as if intoxicated with wine? Others may tolerate, but not Me."

|| 10.68.40 ||

adya niṣkauravāṁ pṛthvīṁ kariṣyāmīty amarṣitaḥ

gṛhītvā halam uttasthau dahann iva jagat-trayam

TRANSLATION

“Today I shall rid the earth of the Kauravas!” declared the furious Balarāma. Thus He took His plow weapon and rose up as if to set the three worlds ablaze.

|| 10.68.41 ||

lāṅgalāgreṇa nagaram udvidārya gajāhvayam

vicakarṣa sa gaṅgāyāṁ prahariṣyann amarṣitaḥ

TRANSLATION

The Lord angrily dug up Hastināpura with the tip of His plow and began to drag it, intending to cast the entire city into the Ganges.

COMMENTARY

By Balarāma’s desire His plow had increased in size. As He dragged Hastināpura toward the water, He ordered the Ganges, “Except for Sāmba, you should attack and kill everyone in the city with your water.” Thus Balarāma would fulfill His promise to rid the earth of the Kauravas while making sure that nothing bad would happen to Sāmba.

|| 10.68.42-43 ||

jala-yānam ivāghūrṇaṁ gaṅgāyāṁ nagaraṁ patat

ākṛṣyamāṇam ālokya kauravāḥ jāta-sambhramāḥ

tam eva śaraṇaṁ jagmuḥ sa-kuṭumbā jijīviṣavaḥ

sa-lakṣmaṇaṁ puras-kṛtya sāmbaṁ prāñjalayaḥ prabhum

TRANSLATION

Seeing that their city was tumbling about like a raft at sea as it was being dragged away, and that it was about to fall into the Ganges, the Kauravas became terrified. To save their lives they approached the Lord for shelter, taking their families with them. Placing Sāmba and Lakṣmaṇā in front, they joined their palms in supplication.

COMMENTARY

Seeing their city rolling about like a boat and about to fall into the Gaṅgā, the Kauravas became fearful. To quickly appease Balarāma, they immediately brought Sāmba and Lakṣmaṇā and placed them in front. The extra syllable in the word *jijīviṣavaḥ* is not a mistake, since there is a statement in the *Bhāsā-vṛtti*, a commentary on Pāṇini's grammar written by Puruṣottama in the twelfth century: *navākśaraika-pādo vṛtti-bhedo 'sti*, "It is an acceptable variation of meter for one line to have nine syllables instead of the usual eight."

|| 10.68.44 ||

rāma rāmākhilādhāra prabhāvaṁ na vidāma te

mūḍhānāṁ naḥ ku-buddhīnāṁ kṣantum arhasy atikramam

TRANSLATION

[The Kauravas said:] O Rāma, Rāma, foundation of everything! We know nothing of Your power. Please excuse our offense, for we are ignorant and misguided.

|| 10.68.45 ||

sthity-utpatty-apyayānāṁ tvam eko hetur nirāśrayaḥ

lokān krīḍanakān īśa krīḍatas te vadanti hi

TRANSLATION

You alone cause the creation, maintenance and annihilation of the cosmos, and of You there is no prior cause. Indeed, O Lord, authorities say that the worlds are mere playthings for You as You perform Your pastimes.

|| 10.68.46 ||

tvam eva mūrdhnīdam ananta līlayā bhū-maṇḍalaṁ bibharṣi sahasra-mūrdhan

ante ca yaḥ svātma-niruddha-viśvaḥ śeṣe 'dvitīyaḥ pariśiṣyamāṇaḥ

TRANSLATION

O unlimited one of a thousand heads, as Your pastime You carry this earthly globe upon one of Your heads. At the time of annihilation You withdraw the entire universe within Your body and, remaining all alone, lie down to rest.

COMMENTARY

The Kurus said, “As You sleep on the bed of Śeṣa, You are one without a second (*advitīyaḥ*), since at that time there is no one else but You existing within the three worlds.”

|| 10.68.47 ||

kopas te ’khila-śikṣārthaṁ na dveṣān na ca matsarāt

bibhrato bhagavan sattvaṁ sthiti-pālana-tatparaḥ

TRANSLATION

Your anger is meant for instructing everyone; it is not a manifestation of hatred or envy. O Supreme Lord, You sustain the pure mode of goodness, and You become angry only to maintain and protect this world.

COMMENTARY

The Kurus meant to say, “The anger which You, who protect (*pālanārthakam*) the world by sustaining the mode of goodness, are now exhibiting is simply for the purpose of instructing everyone by maintaining the principles of civilized conduct. Your display of anger has now made us civilized, whereas previously we were wicked and blinded by pride.” If we read *tatparaḥ* as not having a *visargaḥ*, it would make the phrase vocative: “O Lord whose object is maintenance of correct behavior!”

|| 10.68.48 ||

namas te sarva-bhūtātman sarva-śakti-dharāvyaya

viśva-karman namas te ’stu tvāṁ vayaṁ śaraṇaṁ gatāḥ

TRANSLATION

We bow down to You, O Soul of all beings, O wielder of all potencies, O tireless maker of the universe! Offering You obeisances, we take shelter of You.

COMMENTARY

In case Balarāma says, “I will kill you evil people,” the Kurus reply, “O holder of all potencies, You have the power to either kill us or protect us. In either case, O inexhaustible one, whether we live or die there is no loss for You. But this universe is a result of Your actions, and therefore You should let us live.”

|| 10.68.49 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

evaṁ prapannaiḥ saṁvignair vepamānāyanair balaḥ

prasāditaḥ su-prasanno mā bhaiṣṭety abhayaṁ dadau

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus propitiated by the Kurus, whose city was trembling and who were surrendering to Him in great distress, Lord Balarāma became very calm and kindly disposed toward them. "Do not be afraid," He said, and took away their fear.

COMMENTARY

Balarāma was pleased by the Kauravas, whose city (*ayanaiḥ*) was trembling (*vepamāna*).

|| 10.68.50-51 ||

duryodhanaḥ pāribarhaṁ kuñjarān ṣaṣṭi-hāyanān

dadau ca dvādaśa-śatāny ayutāni turaṅgamān

rathānāṁ ṣaṭ-sahasrāṇi raukmāṇāṁ sūrya-varcasām

dāsīnāṁ niṣka-kaṇṭhīnāṁ sahasraṁ duhitṛ-vatsalaḥ

TRANSLATION

Duryodhana, being very affectionate to his daughter, gave as her dowry 1,200 sixty-year-old elephants, 120,000 horses, 6,000 golden chariots shining like the sun, and 1,000 maidservants with jeweled lockets on their necks.

COMMENTARY

Duryodhana gave 1,200 elephants and 120,000 horses.

|| 10.68.52 ||

pratigṛhya tu tat sarvaṁ bhagavān sātvatarṣabhaḥ

sa-sutaḥ sa-snuṣaḥ prāyāt suhṛdbhir abhinanditaḥ

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord, chief of the Yādavas, accepted all these gifts and then departed with His son and daughter-in-law as His well-wishers bid Him farewell.

|| 10.68.53 ||

tataḥ praviṣṭaḥ sva-puraṁ halāyudhaḥ sametya bandhūn anurakta-cetasaḥ

śaśaṁsa sarvaṁ yadu-puṅgavānāṁ madhye sabhāyāṁ kuruṣu sva-ceṣṭitam

TRANSLATION

Then Lord Halāyudha entered His city [Dvārakā] and met His relatives, whose hearts were all bound to Him in loving attachment. In the assembly hall He reported to the Yadu leaders everything about His dealings with the Kurus.

|| 10.68.54 ||

adyāpi ca puraṁ hy etat sūcayad rāma-vikramam

samunnataṁ dakṣiṇato gaṅgāyām anudṛśyate

TRANSLATION

Even today the city of Hastināpura is visibly elevated on its southern side along the Ganges, thus showing the signs of Lord Balarāma's prowess.

Thus ends the commentary on the Sixty-eighth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Sixty-nine

Nārada Muni Visits Lord Kṛṣṇa's Palaces in Dvārakā

|| 10.69.1-6 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

narakaṁ nihataṁ śrutvā tathodvāhaṁ ca yoṣitām
kṛṣṇenaikena bahvīnāṁ tad-didṛkṣuḥ sma nāradaḥ

citraṁ bataitad ekena vapuṣā yugapat pṛthak
gṛheṣu dvy-aṣṭa-sāhasraṁ striya eka udāvahat

ity utsuko dvāravatīṁ devarṣir draṣṭum āgamat
puṣpitopavanārāma- dvijāli-kula-nāditām

utphullendīvarāmbhoja- kahlāra-kumudotpalaiḥ
churiteṣu saraḥsūccaiḥ kūjitāṁ haṁsa-sārasaiḥ

prāsāda-lakṣair navabhir juṣṭāṁ sphāṭika-rājataiḥ
mahā-marakata-prakhyaiḥ svarṇa-ratna-paricchadaiḥ

vibhakta-rathyā-patha-catvarāpaṇaiḥ śālā-sabhābhī rucirāṁ surālayaiḥ

saṁsikta-mārgāṅgana-vīthi-dehalīṁ patat-patāka-dhvaja-vāritātapām

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Hearing that Lord Kṛṣṇa had killed Narakāsura and had alone married many brides, Nārada Muni desired to see the Lord in this situation. He thought, "It is quite amazing that in a single body Lord Kṛṣṇa simultaneously married sixteen thousand women, each in a separate palace." Thus the sage of the demigods eagerly went to Dvārakā.

The city was filled with the sounds of birds and bees flying about the parks and pleasure gardens, while its lakes, crowded with blooming indīvara, ambhoja, kahlāra, kumuda and utpala lotuses, resounded with the calls of swans and cranes. Dvārakā boasted nine hundred thousand royal palaces, all constructed with crystal and silver and splendorously decorated with huge emeralds. Inside these palaces, the furnishings were bedecked with gold and jewels. Traffic moved along a well-laid-out system of boulevards, roads, intersections and marketplaces, and many assembly houses and temples of demigods graced the charming city. The roads, courtyards, commercial streets and residential patios were all sprinkled with water and shaded from the sun's heat by banners waving from flagpoles.

COMMENTARY

In this chapter Nārada fulfills his desire to see (*didṛkṣuḥ*) how Kṛṣṇa expanded His one transcendental form into each of the palaces in Dvārakā.

It was indeed astonishing how Kṛṣṇa married with one body at one time each of the sixteen thousand queens in separate courtyards of separate houses surrounded by separate walls. Persons like Saubhari enjoyed with many women at once only after expanding into separate bodies, but not in a single body. For this reason (*iti*) Nārada went to see Kṛṣṇa in Dvārakā, which is described in three and a half verses. The city of Dvārakā resounded with the loud cries of swans and herons in lakes filled with lotuses. The palace turrets and spires were glistening with emeralds. The palace attendants wore splendid clothing of gold and jewels. The city was charming with wide roads, lanes, intersections, marketplaces, assembly halls and temples. It was shaded by the many colorful flags flapping in the wind.

|| 10.69.7-8 ||

tasyām antaḥ-puraṁ śrīmad arcitaṁ sarva-dhiṣṇya-paiḥ

hareḥ sva-kauśalaṁ yatra tvaṣṭrā kārtsnyena darśitam

tatra ṣoḍaśabhiḥ sadma-sahasraiḥ samalaṅkṛtam

viveśaikatomaṁ śaureḥ patnīnāṁ bhavanaṁ mahat

TRANSLATION

In the city of Dvārakā was a beautiful private quarter worshiped by the planetary rulers. This district, where the demigod Viśvakarmā had shown all his divine skill, was the residential area of Lord Hari, and thus it was gorgeously decorated by the sixteen thousand palaces of Lord Kṛṣṇa's queens. Nārada Muni entered one of these immense palaces.

COMMENTARY

Dvārakā was beautified with thousands of ornately decorated palaces. Nārada entered one of the queen's palaces.

|| 10.69.9-12 ||

viṣṭabdhaṁ vidruma-stambhair vaidūrya-phalakottamaiḥ

indranīla-mayaiḥ kuḍyair jagatyā cāhata-tviṣā

vitānair nirmitais tvaṣṭrā muktā-dāma-vilambibhiḥ

dāntair āsana-paryaṅkair maṇy-uttama-pariṣkṛtaiḥ

dāsībhir niṣka-kaṇṭhībhiḥ su-vāsobhir alaṅkṛtam

pumbhiḥ sa-kañcukoṣṇīṣa su-vastra-maṇi-kuṇḍalaiḥ

ratna-pradīpa-nikara-dyutibhir nirasta-

dhvāntaṁ vicitra-valabhīṣu śikhaṇḍino 'ṅga

nṛtyanti yatra vihitāguru-dhūpam akṣair

niryāntam īkṣya ghana-buddhaya unnadantaḥ

TRANSLATION

Supporting the palace were coral pillars decoratively inlaid with vaidūrya gems. Sapphires bedecked the walls, and the floors glowed with perpetual brilliance. In that palace Tvaṣṭā had arranged canopies with hanging strands of pearls; there were also seats and beds fashioned of ivory and precious jewels. In attendance were many well-dressed maidservants bearing lockets on their necks, and also armor-clad guards with turbans, fine uniforms and jeweled earrings. The glow of numerous jewel-studded lamps dispelled all darkness in the palace. My dear King, on the ornate ridges of the roof danced loudly crying peacocks, who saw the fragrant aguru incense escaping through the holes of the latticed windows and mistook it for a cloud.

COMMENTARY

The palace is described in four verses. It had coral pillars supporting roofs of *lapis lazuli*, walls covered with sapphires, and floors inlaid with so many sapphires that they always sparkled with radiance. Seeing the smoke of *aguru* incense streaming through the lattice windows, the peacocks mistook it for clouds.

|| 10.69.13 ||

tasmin samāna-guṇa-rūpa-vayaḥ-su-veṣa-dāsī-sahasra-yutayānusavaṁ gṛhiṇyā

vipro dadarśa camara-vyajanena rukma-daṇḍena sātvata-patiṁ parivījayantyā

TRANSLATION

In that palace the learned brāhmaṇa saw the Lord of the Sātvatas, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, together with His wife, who fanned Him with a gold-handled yak-tail fan. She personally served Him in this way, even though she was constantly attended by a thousand maidservants equal to her in personal character, beauty, youth and fine dress.

COMMENTARY

Nārada saw Kṛṣṇa in the palace along with His wife, who was continuously (*anusavaṁ*) fanning Him with a *cāmara*.

|| 10.69.14 ||

tasmin samāna-guṇa-rūpa-vayaḥ-su-veṣa- dāsī-sahasra-yutayānusavaṁ gṛhiṇyā

vipro dadarśa camara-vyajanena rukma- daṇḍena sātvata-patiṁ parivījayantyā

TRANSLATION

In that palace the learned brāhmaṇa saw the Lord of the Sātvatas, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, together with His wife, who fanned Him with a gold-handled yak-tail fan. She personally served Him in this way, even though she was constantly attended by a thousand maidservants equal to her in personal character, beauty, youth and fine dress.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa sat (*avīviśat*) Nārada on His own seat.

|| 10.69.15 ||

tasyāvanijya caraṇau tad-apaḥ sva-mūrdhnā

bibhraj jagad-gurutamo ’pi satāṁ patir hi

brahmaṇya-deva iti yad guṇa-nāma

yuktaṁ tasyaiva yac-caraṇa-śaucam aśeṣa-tīrtham

TRANSLATION

The Lord bathed Nārada’s feet and then put the water on His own head. Although Lord Kṛṣṇa is the supreme spiritual authority of the universe and the master of His devotees, it was proper for Him to behave in this way, for His name is Brahmaṇya-deva, “the Lord who favors the bṛāhmaṇas.” Thus Śrī Kṛṣṇa honored the sage Nārada by bathing his feet, even though the water that bathes the Lord’s own feet becomes the Ganges, the ultimate holy shrine.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa, the master of the devotees (*satāṁ patir*), bathed Nārada’s feet and then addressed him. The main verb “spoke” is in verse sixteen. Someone may protest that it is not proper for Kṛṣṇa to wash the feet of His servant. But Kṛṣṇa is called *brahmaṇya-deva*, indicating His quality of being respectful to the *brāhmaṇas*. Thus, since Nārada is a *brāhmaṇa*, it is appropriate that Kṛṣṇa bathed his feet. It should not be said that Kṛṣṇa behaved like this to purify Himself, since the Ganges, which is the ultimate purifying place *(aśeṣa-tīrtham*), bathes His feet. Even though Nārada is Kṛṣṇa’s servant, it should be understood that he did not reveal Kṛṣṇa’s superiority in order not to obstruct the Lord’s desire to serve the *brāhmaṇas*.

|| 10.69.16 ||

sampūjya deva-ṛṣi-varyam ṛṣiḥ purāṇo

nārāyaṇo nara-sakho vidhinoditena

vāṇyābhibhāṣya mitayāmṛta-miṣṭayā taṁ

prāha prabho bhagavate karavāma he kim

TRANSLATION

After fully worshiping the great sage of the demigods according to Vedic injunctions, Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is Himself the original sage—Nārāyaṇa, the friend of Nara—conversed with Nārada, and the Lord’s measured speech was as sweet as nectar. Finally the Lord asked Nārada, “What may We do for you, Our lord and master?”

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa happily worshiped His pure devotee Nārada Muni according to the Vedic injunction (*vidhinoditena*) that *kṣatriyas* must honor the *brāhmaṇas*. Kṛṣṇa is *ṛṣiḥ purāṇaḥ*, the oldest supreme spiritual master. Although Kṛṣṇa is the oldest because of His being the Personality of Godhead, He is also new as He comes as Nārāyaṇa, the friend of Nara (*nara-sakhaḥ*), in order to broadcast the scriptural injunctions. Kṛṣṇa spoke with measured words saturated with the sweetest nectar: "You are Our master (*prabho*) because you are a learned *brāhmaṇa*. What can I do for you?"

|| 10.69.17 ||

śrī-nārada uvāca

naivādbhutaṁ tvayi vibho 'khila-loka-nāthe

maitrī janeṣu sakaleṣu damaḥ khalānām

niḥśreyasāya hi jagat-sthiti-rakṣaṇābhyāṁ

svairāvatāra urugāya vidāma suṣṭhu

TRANSLATION

Śrī Nārada said: O almighty Lord, it is no surprise that You, the ruler of all worlds, show friendship for all people and yet subdue the envious. As we well know, You descend by Your sweet will in order to bestow the highest good on this universe by maintaining and protecting it. Thus Your glories are widely sung.

COMMENTARY

"In the material world, if the object of worship worships the worshipper, it will not be beneficial for the worshipper. However, because You are independent, it is always beneficial whether You worship Your devotee, accept his worship or punish him." This is expressed in this verse.

Nārada said, "It is not at all amazing that You are the benefactor (*maitrī*) of all people. Because You are the monarch of all worlds and because all living entities are in the status of dependent *jīvas*, they must factually be Your servants."

The following verse from the *Padma Purāṇa* explains the meaning of the *mantra Om*:

a-kāreṇocyate viṣṇuḥ śrīr u-kāreṇa kathyate

ma-kāras tu tayor dāsaḥ pañca-viṁśaḥ prakīrtitaḥ

"The letter *a* signifies Lord Viṣṇu, the letter *u* signifies the goddess Śrī, and the letter *m* refers to their servant, who is the twenty-fifth element."

Nārada continued, "For *brāhmaṇas* like me who constantly worship You with devotion, Your worshiping us gives displeasure. For others who serve You like Vidura and Uddhava, You distress their minds by refusing to accept their worship. For the ordinary people who are like animals within the cycle of material life and who never worship You, You bestow Your merciful glance. And You punish the envious like Jarāsandha. Ultimately You benefit all these persons by Your appearance in the material world. I know that You bestow the highest benefit upon everyone by maintaining and protecting the universe, and by giving them *prema-bhakti* and liberation."

|| 10.69.18 ||

dṛṣṭaṁ tavāṅghri-yugalaṁ janatāpavargaṁ

brahmādibhir hṛdi vicintyam agādha-bodhaiḥ

saṁsāra-kūpa-patitottaraṇāvalambaṁ

dhyāyaṁś carāmy anugṛhāṇa yathā smṛtiḥ syāt

TRANSLATION

Now I have seen Your feet, which grant liberation to Your devotees, which even Lord Brahmā and other great personalities of unfathomable intelligence can only meditate upon within their hearts, and which those who have fallen into the well of material existence resort to for deliverance. Please favor me so that I may constantly think of You as I travel about. Please grant Me the power to remember You.

COMMENTARY

"O great sage! For what purpose have you come? Do you intend to stay here or go elsewhere?" Anticipating this question, Nārada speaks this verse.

|| 10.69.19 ||

tato 'nyad āviśad gehaṁ kṛṣṇa-patnyāḥ sa nāradaḥ

yogeśvareśvarasyāṅga yoga-māyā-vivitsayā

TRANSLATION

Nārada then entered the palace of another of Lord Kṛṣṇa's wives, my dear King. He was eager to witness the spiritual potency possessed by the master of all masters of mystic power.

COMMENTARY

With a desire to perceive (*vivitsayā*) Kṛṣṇa's *yogamāyā,* Nārada went to another queen's palace.

|| 10.69.20-22 ||

dīvyantam akṣais tatrāpi priyayā coddhavena ca

pūjitaḥ parayā bhaktyā pratyutthānāsanādibhiḥ

pṛṣṭaś cāviduṣevāsau kadāyāto bhavān iti

kriyate kiṁ nu pūrṇānām apūrṇair asmad-ādibhiḥ

athāpi brūhi no brahman janmaitac chobhanaṁ kuru

sa tu vismita utthāya tūṣṇīm anyad agād gṛham

TRANSLATION

There he saw the Lord playing at dice with His beloved consort and His friend Uddhava. Lord Kṛṣṇa worshiped Nārada by standing up, offering him a seat, and so on, and then, as if He did not know, asked him, "When did you arrive? What can needy persons like Us do for those who are full in themselves? In any case, My dear brāhmaṇa, please make My life auspicious." Thus addressed, Nārada was astonished. He simply stood up silently and went to another palace.

COMMENTARY

At Satyabhāmā's palace, Nārada saw Kṛṣṇa playing dice. Kṛṣṇa spoke to Nārada who was standing silently in great astonishment.

|| 10.69.23 ||

tatrāpy acaṣṭa govindaṁ lālayantaṁ sutān śiśūn

tato 'nyasmin gṛhe 'paśyan majjanāya kṛtodyamam

TRANSLATION

This time Nāradajī saw that Lord Kṛṣṇa was engaged as an affectionate father petting His small children. From there he entered another palace and saw Lord Kṛṣṇa preparing to take His bath.

COMMENTARY

In all the palaces Nārada visited, Kṛṣṇa worshiped and honored him. This should be understood, though not mentioned in the verses. Nārada saw (*acaṣṭa*) Kṛṣṇa playing with His infant sons. Fourteen and a half verses describe what Nārada observed. Just as Nārada saw numerous manifestations with various moods and activities of Kṛṣṇa's one body, similarly he also saw numerous manifestations of the single bodies of Uddhava and others. Nārada, who went at the speed of the mind in a single moment to each of the sixteen thousand palaces, saw Kṛṣṇa performing different activities at different times. In other words, within a single moment the time span of sixty *ghaṭikās* (comprising an entire day) entered, manifesting in the various locations the various phases of dawn and so on and the corresponding activities of these times. Thus Nārada understood that all the times of the whole day and all the different activities were occurring simultaneously. The phrase *majjanāya kṛtodyamam* (preparing to bathe) indicates it was early morning or dawn in that palace.

|| 10.69.24 ||

juhvantaṁ ca vitānāgnīn yajantaṁ pañcabhir makhaiḥ

bhojayantaṁ dvijān kvāpi bhuñjānam avaśeṣitam

TRANSLATION

In one place the Lord was offering oblations into the sacrificial fires; in another, worshiping through the five mahā-yajñas; in another, feeding brāhmaṇas; and in yet another, eating the remnants of food left by brāhmaṇas.

COMMENTARY

All the different times of the day were occurring simultaneously in Kṛṣṇa's palaces. Thus in one palace Nārada saw Kṛṣṇa offering oblations into the sacrificial fires (*vitāna-agnīn*), a morning ritual. In another palace Kṛṣṇa was performing the five *mahā-yajñas*, or great sacrifices compulsory for a householder: reciting the *Vedas*; offering oblations into the sacrificial fire; waiting on guests; making offerings to the forefathers; and offering a share of one's food to living entities in general. In that palace it was noon. In another palace Nārada saw Kṛṣṇa feeding the *brāhmaṇas* and accepting their remnants—an afternoon activity.

|| 10.69.25 ||

juhvantaṁ ca vitānāgnīn yajantaṁ pañcabhir makhaiḥ

bhojayantaṁ dvijān kvāpi bhuñjānam avaśeṣitam

TRANSLATION

In one place the Lord was offering oblations into the sacrificial fires; in another, worshiping through the five mahā-yajñas; in another, feeding brāhmaṇas; and in yet another, eating the remnants of food left by brāhmaṇas.

COMMENTARY

Elsewhere, Kṛṣṇa was performing sunset rites (*sandhyām upāsīnam*). In another palace it was dawn, and Kṛṣṇa was moving about with His sword and shield (*asi-carmābhyām carantam*).

|| 10.69.26 ||

aśvair gajai rathaiḥ kvāpi vicarantaṁ gadāgrajam

kvacic chayānaṁ paryaṅke stūyamānaṁ ca vandibhiḥ

TRANSLATION

In one place Lord Gadāgraja was riding on horses, elephants and chariots, and in another place He was resting on His bed while bards recited His glories.

COMMENTARY

Riding on horses and elephants is a noon activity, whereas one lies down during the latter part of night.

|| 10.69.27 ||

mantrayantaṁ ca kasmiṁścin mantribhiś coddhavādibhiḥ

jala-krīḍā-rataṁ kvāpi vāramukhyābalāvṛtam

TRANSLATION

Somewhere He was consulting with royal ministers like Uddhava, and somewhere else He was enjoying in the water, surrounded by many society girls and other young women.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa met with Uddhava and His counselors around dusk and enjoyed water sports in the afternoon.

|| 10.69.28 ||

kutracid dvija-mukhyebhyo dadataṁ gāḥ sv-alaṅkṛtāḥ

itihāsa-purāṇāni śṛṇvantaṁ maṅgalāni ca

TRANSLATION

Somewhere He was giving well-decorated cows to exalted brāhmaṇas, and elsewhere he was listening to the auspicious narration of epic histories and Purāṇas.

COMMENTARY

Giving cows in charity occurs in the morning. The Smṛti sastras say, *itihaśa-purāṇābhyāṁ śaśṭha-saptamakau nayet*, "one should pass the sixth and seventh parts of the day (afternoon and evening) in hearing the histories (*Itihāsas*) and the Purāṇas."

|| 10.69.29 ||

hasantaṁ hāsa-kathayā kadācit priyayā gṛhe

kvāpi dharmaṁ sevamānam artha-kāmau ca kutracit

TRANSLATION

Somewhere Lord Kṛṣṇa was found enjoying the company of a particular wife by exchanging joking words with her. Somewhere else He was found engaged, along with His wife, in religious ritualistic functions. Somewhere Kṛṣṇa was found engaged in matters of economic development, and somewhere else He was found enjoying family life according to the regulative principles of the śāstras.

COMMENTARY

Joking conversations (*hāsa-kathayā*) take place during the nighttime, whereas religious rituals, economic development and family enjoyment (*dharmaṁ artha-kāmau*) occur during both the day and the night.

|| 10.69.30 ||

dhyāyantam ekam āsīnaṁ puruṣaṁ prakṛteḥ param

śuśrūṣantaṁ gurūn kvāpi kāmair bhogaiḥ saparyayā

TRANSLATION

Somewhere He was sitting alone, meditating on the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is transcendental to material nature, and somewhere He was rendering menial service to His elders, offering them desirable things and reverential worship.

COMMENTARY

The activity of meditation indicates the *brāhma-muhūrta* (*dhyāyantam*), the early morning hours before sunrise.

|| 10.69.31 ||

kurvantaṁ vigrahaṁ kaiścit sandhiṁ cānyatra keśavam

kutrāpi saha rāmeṇa cintayantaṁ satāṁ śivam

TRANSLATION

In one place He was planning battles in consultation with some of His advisers, and in another place He was making peace. Somewhere Lord Keśava and Lord Balarāma were together pondering the welfare of the pious.

|| 10.69.32 ||

putrāṇāṁ duhitṝṇāṁ ca kāle vidhy-upayāpanam

dārair varais tat-sadṛśaiḥ kalpayantaṁ vibhūtibhiḥ

TRANSLATION

Nārada saw Lord Kṛṣṇa engaged in getting His sons and daughters married to suitable brides and bridegrooms at the appropriate time, and the marriage ceremonies were being performed with great pomp.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa married His sons and daughters according to religious princi-ples (*vidhy-upayāpanam*) using many opulent materials (*vibhūtibhiḥ*).

|| 10.69.33 ||

prasthāpanopanayanair apatyānāṁ mahotsavān

vīkṣya yogeśvareśasya yeṣāṁ lokā visismire

TRANSLATION

Nārada observed how Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the master of all yoga masters, arranged to send away His daughters and sons-in-law, and also to receive them home again, at the time of great holiday celebrations. All the citizens were astonished to see these celebrations.

COMMENTARY

At the end of yearly festivals Kṛṣṇa sent His daughters and their husbands from His home back to their own houses. At the beginning of the festivals He brought them from their houses. Seeing this, people were astonished (*visismire*).

|| 10.69.34 ||

yajantaṁ sakalān devān kvāpi kratubhir ūrjitaiḥ

pūrtayantaṁ kvacid dharmaṁ kūrpārāma-maṭhādibhiḥ

TRANSLATION

Somewhere He was worshiping all the demigods with elaborate sacrifices, and elsewhere He was fulfilling His religious obligations by doing public welfare work, such as the construction of wells, public parks and monasteries.

COMMENTARY

Sometimes Kṛṣṇa would worship the demigods (*yajantaṁ devān*) during Caitra (spring), Cāturmāsya and other auspicious months or holy days. At other times such as the day commemorating the beginning of a *yuga*, such as *akṣaya-tṛītiya* which marks the start of Tretā-yuga, Kṛṣṇa would perform works of public piety such as digging wells for drinking water.

|| 10.69.35 ||

carantaṁ mṛgayāṁ kvāpi hayam āruhya saindhavam

ghnantaṁ tatra paśūn medhyān parītaṁ yadu-puṅgavaiḥ

TRANSLATION

In another place He was on a hunting expedition. Mounted on His Sindhī horse and accompanied by the most heroic of the Yadus, He was killing animals meant for offering in sacrifice.

COMMENTARY

In another place Kṛṣṇa was mounting a horse born in the Sindh (*saindhavam*) province (North India).

|| 10.69.36 ||

avyakta-lingaṁ prakṛtiṣv antaḥ-pura-gṛhādiṣu

kvacic carantaṁ yogeśaṁ tat-tad-bhāva-bubhutsayā

TRANSLATION

Somewhere Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of mystic power, was moving about in disguise among the homes of ministers and other citizens in order to understand what each of them was thinking.

COMMENTARY

Disguising Himself in some other dress (*avyakta-lingaṁ*), Kṛṣṇa visited the homes of His ministers and His own inner chambers in order to know the mentalities (*tat-tad-bhāva-bubhutsayā*) of the people there. Though Kṛṣṇa is all-knowing (*yogeśaṁ*), being immersed in *prema*, He covered His knowledge potency (*sarvajñatva-śakti*) with His pastimes potency (*līlā-śakti*) in order to act like this.

|| 10.69.37 ||

athovāca hṛṣīkeśaṁ nāradaḥ prahasann iva

yoga-māyodayaṁ vīkṣya mānuṣīm īyuṣo gatim

TRANSLATION

Having thus seen this display of the Lord's Yogamāyā, Nārada mildly laughed and then addressed Lord Hṛṣīkeśa, who was adopting the behavior of a human being.

COMMENTARY

Nārada fully understood Kṛṣṇa's omniscience, so when he saw Kṛṣṇa trying to detect the mood of His ministers by moving about in disguise, he could not help laughing (*prahasann*). But remem-bering Kṛṣṇa's majesty (*aiśvarya*), he somewhat restrained his laughter. The phrase "seeing the rise of the Kṛṣṇa's *yogamāyā*" (*yoga-māyodayaṁ vīkṣya*) as Kṛṣṇa was absorbed in His own human-like pastimes (*mānuṣīm īyuso gatim*) indicates Nārada's astonishment.

|| 10.69.38 ||

vidāma yoga-māyās te durdarśā api māyinām

yogeśvarātman nirbhātā bhavat-pāda-niṣevayā

TRANSLATION

[Nārada said:] Now we understand Your mystic potencies, which are difficult to comprehend, even for great mystics, O Supreme Soul, master of all mystic power. Only by serving Your feet have I been able to perceive Your powers.

COMMENTARY

Nāradaji said, “O master of mystic power (*yogeśvara*)! By serving Your lotus feet may we know (*vidama:vedama*) the mystic potencies (*yoga-māyās*) present within You?”

Kṛṣṇa replied, “But Nārada, why should such all-knowing persons as you have any lack of knowledge?”

Nārada: “Even mystic *yogīs* like Śiva and Brahmā cannot see (*durdarsā*) Your mystic powers, what then to speak of understanding them? And what to speak of their acting within them.”

|| 10.69.39 ||

anujānīhi māṁ deva lokāṁs te yaśasāplutān

paryaṭāmi tavodgāyan līlā bhuvana-pāvanīḥ

TRANSLATION

O Lord, please give me Your leave. I will wander about the worlds, which are flooded with Your fame, loudly singing about Your pastimes, which purify the universe.

COMMENTARY

Nārada said, “Seeing Your astonishing pastimes, I cannot maintain my steadiness. Therefore permit me to leave so I can tell this to my dear friends in various places.”

|| 10.69.40 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

brahman dhannasya vaktāhaṁ kartā tad-anumoditā

tac chikṣayan lokam imam āsthitaḥ putra mā khidaḥ

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: O brāhmaṇa, I am the speaker of religion, its performer and sanctioner. I observe religious principles to teach them to the world, My child, so do not be disturbed.

COMMENTARY

Nārada said, “Although I am Your devoted servant, I have experienced great sorrow in Your presence because with Your lotus hands You have washed my unfortunate feet, hardened by traveling.”

In response, Kṛṣṇa speaks this verse: “I observe religious principles to instruct the world. After all, I am a householder *kṣatriya* and you are a *brāhmaṇa*. If I did not worship you when you came to My house, then how can the *dharma* preached by Me through proper conduct be established? As I state in the *Bhagavad-gītā*: *yad yad ācarati sreṣṭhas tat tad evetaro janaḥ*: ‘Whatever a great person does, ordinary people follow.’”

“Thus I bathed your feet today to propagate the principles of religion. Before I began My pastimes of directly teaching religious principles, you came and offered prayers to Me after I had killed the Keśī demon. At that time, I simply listened to your elaborate glorification but did nothing to honor you. Just remember this and consider.”

Nārada replied, “That may be, but in washing my feet, I have committed an offense in letting You drink the water that touched my feet.”

Kṛṣṇa pacified Nārada with affectionate words: “O son! (*putra*). Do not think that you have committed an offense by allowing Me to bathe your feet today and accept the water as holy remnants. Just as a son does not offend his father by touching him with his foot while sitting on the father’s lap, so you should understand that in the same way you have not offended Me.”

|| 10.69.41 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

ity ācarantaṁ sad-dharmān pāvanān gṛha-medhinām

tam eva sarva-geheṣu santam ekaṁ dadarśa ha

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus in every palace Nārada saw the Lord in His same personal form, executing the transcendental principles of religion that purify those engaged in household affairs.

COMMENTARY

This verse summarizes the ideas which were previously discussed. As stated in Text 2 of this chapter, all of Kṛṣṇa's activities in the many palaces were performed by Kṛṣṇa's single spiritual form (*ekena vapusā*), which manifested in each of the sixteen thousand palaces. This vision was revealed to Nārada because of his desire to see it and Kṛṣṇa's desire to show it to him. The other residents of Dvārakā could see Kṛṣṇa only in the particular part of the city they themselves occupied, and not anywhere else, even if they would sometimes go to another precinct on some business. Thus the Lord gave a special view of His pastimes to His beloved devotee Nārada Muni.

|| 10.69.42 ||

kṛṣṇasyānanta-vīryasya yoga-māyā-mahodayam

muhur dṛṣṭvā ṛṣir abhūd vismito jāta-kautukaḥ

TRANSLATION

Having repeatedly seen the vast mystic display of Lord Kṛṣṇa, whose power is unlimited, the sage was amazed and filled with wonder.

|| 10.69.43 ||

ity artha-kāma-dharmeṣu kṛṣṇena śraddhitātmanā

samyak sabhājitaḥ prītas tam evānusmaran yayau

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa greatly honored Nārada, faithfully presenting him with gifts related to economic prosperity, sense gratification and religious duties. Thus fully satisfied, the sage departed, constantly remembering the Lord.

COMMENTARY

Nārada was worshiped with devotion by Kṛṣṇa, whose mind was filled with faith (*śraddhitātmanā*) in economic development, sense gratification and religious duties (*artha-kāma-dharmeṣu*).

|| 10.69.44 ||

evaṁ manuṣya-padavīm anuvartamāno

nārāyaṇo 'khila-bhavāya gṛhīta-śaktiḥ

reme 'ṇga ṣoḍaśa-sahasra-varāṅganānāṁ

sa-vrīḍa-sauhṛda-nirīkṣaṇa-hāsa-juṣṭaḥ

TRANSLATION

In this way Lord Nārāyaṇa imitated the ways of ordinary humans, manifesting His divine potencies for the benefit of all beings. Thus He enjoyed, dear King, in the company of His sixteen thousand exalted consorts, who served the Lord with their shy, affectionate glances and laughter.

COMMENTARY

Someone may object, "Why should Kṛṣṇa have any faith in economic development and sense gratification (*artha* and *kāma*)? And why does Kṛṣṇa imitate the ways of human beings?" This verse answers these questions.

"Kṛṣṇa's human-like activities are meant for the welfare of all people (*akhila-bhavāya*). By remembering His pastimes people become free from the cycle of material existence."

"But why should Kṛṣṇa care to stop their material existence?"

"Because Kṛṣṇa is endowed with mercy (*kṛpa-śaktiḥ:gṛhīta-śaktiḥ*). But this is not the only purpose for Kṛṣṇa's permanently engaging in human activities. Kṛṣṇa engages in blissful pastimes with His beloved human consorts who comprise His internal energy and are superior even to Lakṣmī, the goddess of fortune. Or else Kṛṣṇa performs these activities to eternally enjoy (*reme*) with His unalloyed devotees who worship His human form, the original source of all the Viṣṇu forms in Vaikuṇṭha."

|| 10.69.45 ||

yānīha viśva-vilayodbhava-vṛtti-hetuḥ

karmāṇy ananya-viṣayāṇi harīś cakāra

yas tv aṅga gāyati śṛṇoty anumodate

vā bhaktir bhaved bhagavati hy apavarga-mārge

TRANSLATION

Lord Hari is the ultimate cause of universal creation, maintenance and destruction. My dear King, anyone who chants about, hears about or simply appreciates the extraordinary activities He performed in this world, which are impossible to imitate, will surely develop devotion for the Supreme Lord, the bestower of liberation.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa's human-like pastimes are not meant only to liberate mankind from the material world, but also to bestow *prema-bhakti* upon one and all. Kṛṣṇa causes the creation, maintenance and destruction of the universe. The term *ananya-viṣayāni* may indicate that Kṛṣṇa performed activities in Dvārakā that were unusual even for His plenary expansions, to say nothing of others. Or the term can be understood to indicate that Kṛṣṇa performed these activities for the sake of His pure, exclusive devotees.

In any case, one who recites or hears Kṛṣṇa's pastimes will attain *prema-bhakti* for the Lord. Devotion for Kṛṣṇa is obtainable for those on the path of liberation (*apavarga:moksa-mārge*). Here libe-ration means devotional service. Actually liberation from material existence occurs even at the beginning of devotional practice.

Thus ends the commentary on the Sixty-ninth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Lord Kṛṣṇa's Daily Activities

|| 10.70.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

athoṣasy upavṛttāyāṁ kukkuṭān kūjato 'śapan

gṛhīta-kaṇṭhyaḥ patibhir mādhavyo virahāturāḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: As dawn approached, the wives of Lord Mādhava, each embraced around the neck by her husband, cursed the crowing roosters. The ladies were disturbed that now they would be separated from Him.

COMMENTARY

This chapter describes Kṛṣṇa's early morning activities as well as consideration of the business presented to Him in the Sudharmā assembly by Nārada and a messenger. In the previous chapter it was stated that Kṛṣṇa faithfully observed the principles of economic development, religion and sense gratification. This verse explains how Kṛṣṇa carried out the principles of religion. As sunrise approached (*upavṛttāyāṁ*) the roosters began crowing. Kṛṣṇa's wives (*madhavyaḥ*) such as Rukmiṇī, who were embraced by their husbands, cursed the roosters: "O roosters! For announcing the arrival of the sun, which brings separation from our beloved Kṛṣṇa, you should die immediately!" The word *patibhiḥ* is plural because Kṛṣṇa was appearing in multiple forms.

|| 10.70.2 ||

vayāṁsy aroruvan kṛṣṇaṁ bodhayantīva vandinaḥ

gāyatsv aliṣv anidrāṇi mandāra-vana-vāyubhiḥ

TRANSLATION

The bees' buzzing, caused by the fragrant breeze from the pārijāta garden, roused the birds from sleep. And when the birds began to sing loudly, they woke Lord Kṛṣṇa like court poets reciting His glories.

COMMENTARY

Awakened by the fragrant breezes, the bees started singing, which in turn roused the birds. Kṛṣṇa woke up from hearing the sweet chirping of these birds, which sounded like bards.

|| 10.70.3 ||

muhūrtaṁ taṁ tu vaidarbhī nāmṛṣyad ati-śobhanam

parirambhaṇa-viśleṣāt priya-bāhv-antaraṁ gatā

TRANSLATION

Lying in her beloved's arms, Queen Vaidarbhī did not like this most auspicious hour, for it meant she would lose His embrace.

COMMENTARY

Because of losing the embrace of her husband, Rukmiṇī (Vaidarbhī) did not consider the auspicious *brāhma-muhūrta* period to be auspicious. Rukmiṇī shows the attitude of all the queens.

|| 10.70.4-5 ||

brāhme muhūrta utthāya vāry upaspṛśya mādhavaḥ

dadhyau prasanna-karaṇa ātmānaṁ tamasaḥ param

ekaṁ svayaṁ-jyotir ananyam avyayaṁ sva-saṁsthayā nitya-nirasta-kalmaṣam

brahmākhyam asyodbhava-nāśa-hetubhiḥ sva-śaktibhir lakṣita-bhāva-nirvṛtim

TRANSLATION

Lord Mādhava would rise during the brāhma-muhūrta period and touch water. With a clear mind He would then meditate upon Himself, the single, self-luminous, unequaled and infallible Supreme Truth, known as Brahman, who by His very nature ever dispels all contamination, and who through His personal energies, which cause the creation and destruction of this universe, manifests His own pure and blissful existence.

COMMENTARY

Just as some other person meditates during the *brāhma-muhūrta* period, Kṛṣṇa also meditated on Himself (*ātmānam:svam*), as the one Supreme Lord who reveals Himself (*svayaṁ-jyotir*) beyond the darkness of material nature (*tamasaḥ param*). But, it may be objected that others such as Saṅkarṣaṇa are also the Lord. Yes, but there is no other (*ananyam*) *avatāra* compared to Kṛṣṇa. Moreover, since Kṛṣṇa's plenary *avatāras* such as Saṅkarṣaṇa and others are each individually and eternally present within Him, Kṛṣṇa is perfectly complete (*avyayam:paripūrṇam*). The reason, however, for Kṛṣṇa's appearance is His mercy. By making Himself directly visible to all persons, Kṛṣṇa removes their ignorance. The impersonal Brahman (*brahmākhyam*) also comes from Kṛṣṇa. This is stated in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (8.24.38):

madīyaṁ mahimānaṁ ca paraṁ brahmeti śabditam

vetsyasy anugrahītaṁ me sampraśnair vivṛtaṁ hṛdi

"You will be thoroughly advised and favored by Me. Because of your inquiries everything about My glories, which are known as *paraṁ brahma*, will be manifest within your heart. Thus you will know everything about Me." And also the *Bhagavad-gītā* (14.27) says: *brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham*, "I am the basis of the impersonal Brahman." *Brahmākhyam* can also mean *brahmākhyaṁ brahma-nāmakam*, "He who is called Brahman" or *brahmeti paramātmeti*, *bhagavān iti śabdyate*, "The Absolute Truth is known as Brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān." (SB 1.2.11)

Kṛṣṇa's superexcellence is described in this verse. By His energies Kṛṣṇa bestows knowledge and devotion, and He creates and destroys the universe. *Lakṣita-bhāva-nirvṛtim* means that Kṛṣṇa gives pleasure to the created beings through His various energies. Specifi-cally, for the devotees, Kṛṣṇa gives happiness by filling them with ecstatic love, *kṛṣṇa-prema*. For the followers of *dharma*, who carefully observe the religious principles, Kṛṣṇa gives happiness. To the sinful, Kṛṣṇa gives happiness by killing them and granting liberation.

|| 10.70.6 ||

athāpluto 'mbhasy amale yathā-vidhi kriyā-kalāpaṁ paridhāya vāsasī

cakāra sandhyopagamādi sattamo hutānalo brahma jajāpa vāg-yataḥ

TRANSLATION

Lord Mādhava would rise during the brāhma-muhūrta period and touch water. With a clear mind He would then meditate upon Himself, the single, self-luminous, unequaled and infallible Supreme Truth, known as Brahman, who by His very nature ever dispels all contamination, and who through His personal energies, which cause the creation and destruction of this universe, manifests His own pure and blissful existence.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa executed an entire sequence of rituals (*kriyā-kalāpaṁ*). After expertly (*sattama*) performing all the *sandhya* rites, Kṛṣṇa silently chanted the Brahma *gāyatrī*.

|| 10.70.7-9 ||

upasthāyārkam udyantaṁ tarpayitvātmanaḥ kalāḥ

devān ṛṣīn pitṝn vṛddhān viprān abhyarcya cātmavān

dhenūnāṁ rukma-śṛṅgīnāṁ sādhvīnāṁ mauktika-srajām

payasvinīnāṁ gṛṣṭīnāṁ sa-vatsānāṁ su-vāsasām

dadau rūpya-khurāgrāṇāṁ kṣaumājina-tilaiḥ saha

alaṅkṛtebhyo viprebhyo badvaṁ badvaṁ dine dine

TRANSLATION

Each day the Lord worshiped the rising sun and propitiated the demigods, sages and forefathers, who are all His expansions. The self-possessed Lord would then carefully worship His elders and the brāhmaṇas. To those well-attired brāhmaṇas He would offer herds of tame and peaceful cows with gold-plated horns and pearl necklaces. These cows were also dressed in fine cloth, and the fronts of their hooves were plated with silver. Providers of abundant milk, they had each given birth only once and were accompanied by their calves. Daily the Lord gave many groups of 13,084 cows to the learned brāhmaṇas, together with linen, deerskins and sesame seeds.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa executed His daily duties with great self-control (*ātmavan*). Every day (*dine dine*) Kṛṣṇa donated one hundred and seven groups (*badvaṁ badvaṁ*) of 13,084 cows [totaling 1,400,000] with first born calves (*gṛṣṭīnām*) to the *brāhmaṇas*!

|| 10.70.10 ||

go-vipra-devatā-vṛddha- vgurūn bhūtāni sarvaśaḥ

namaskṛtyātma-sambhūtīr maṅgalāni samaspṛśat

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa would offer obeisances to the cows, brāhmaṇas and demigods, His elders and spiritual masters, and all living beings—all of whom are expansions of His supreme personality. Then He would touch auspicious things.

COMMENTARY

Ātma-sambhūtīr means "His own opulences," and *maṅgalāni* "'auspicious things" refers to such objects as a brown cow.

|| 10.70.11 ||

ātmānaṁ bhūṣayām āsa nara-loka-vibhūṣaṇam

vāsobhir bhūṣaṇaiḥ svīyair divya-srag-anulepanaiḥ

TRANSLATION

He would decorate His body, the very ornament of human society, with His own special clothes and jewelry and with divine flower garlands and ointments.

|| 10.70.12 ||

avekṣyājyaṁ tathādarśaṁ go-vṛṣa-dvija-devatāḥ

kāmāṁś ca sarva-varṇānāṁ paurāntaḥ-pura-cāriṇām

pradāpya prakṛtīḥ kāmaiḥ pratoṣya pratyanandata

TRANSLATION

He would then look at ghee, a mirror, the cows and bulls, the brāhmaṇas and the demigods and see to it that the members of all the social classes living in the palace and throughout the city were satisfied with gifts. After this He would greet His ministers, gratifying them by fulfilling all their desires.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa greeted His ministers (*prakṛtīḥ*).

|| 10.70.13 ||

saṁvibhajyāgrato viprān srak-tāmbūlānulepanaiḥ

suhṛdaḥ prakṛtīr dārān upāyuṅkta tataḥ svayam

TRANSLATION

After first distributing flower garlands, pān and sandalwood paste to the brāhmaṇas, He would give these gifts to His friends, ministers and wives, and finally He would partake of them Himself.

COMMENTARY

After distributing these items to the *brāhmaṇas* and others, Kṛṣṇa accepted them (*upāyunkta*) for His own pleasure.

|| 10.70.14 ||

tāvat sūta upānīya syandanaṁ paramādbhutam

sugrīvādyair hayair yuktaṁ praṇamyāvasthito 'grataḥ

TRANSLATION

By then the Lord's driver would have brought His supremely wonderful chariot, yoked with Sugrīva and His other horses. His charioteer would bow down to the Lord and then stand before Him.

|| 10.70.15 ||

gṛhītvā pāṇinā pāṇī sārathes tam athāruhat

sātyaky-uddhava-saṁyuktaḥ pūrvādrim iva bhāskaraḥ

TRANSLATION

Holding on to His charioteer's hands, Lord Kṛṣṇa would mount the chariot, together with Sātyaki and Uddhava, just like the sun rising over the easternmost mountain.

COMMENTARY

Dāruka (Kṛṣṇa's driver) stood beside the chariot with joined palms. Kṛṣṇa held his joined hands with His right hand and mounted the chariot.

|| 10.70.16 ||

īkṣito 'ntaḥ-pura-strīṇāṁ sa-vrīḍa-prema-vīkṣitaiḥ

kṛcchrād visṛṣṭo niragāj jāta-hāso haran manaḥ

TRANSLATION

The palace women would look upon Lord Kṛṣṇa with shy, loving glances, and thus He would get free from them only with difficulty. He would then set off, His smiling face captivating their minds.

COMMENTARY

Though Kṛṣṇa was accompanied by Sātyaki, Uddhava and others, the queens glanced at Him with shy loving glances hinting at their agitation. Their glances implied, "How can we tolerate the torment of being separated from You?" Captivated by their affection, Kṛṣṇa smiled, indicating "My dear restless ladies, why are you so overwhelmed by this little bit of separation? I am coming back later today to enjoy with you." Enchanting their minds with His sweet smile, Kṛṣṇa somehow freed Himself from the bondage of their loving glances with great difficulty.

|| 10.70.17 ||

sudharmākhyāṁ sabhāṁ sarvair vṛṣṇibhiḥ parivāritaḥ

prāviśad yan-niviṣṭānāṁ na santy aṅga ṣaḍ ūrmayaḥ

TRANSLATION

The Lord, attended by all the Vṛṣṇis, would enter the Sudharmā assembly hall, which protects those who enter it from the six waves of material life, dear King.

COMMENTARY

When Kṛṣṇa would exit separately from each of His many palaces, each individual form would be visible to the persons present on those particular palace grounds and to the neighboring residents, but not to others. Coming along the main road up to the entrance of the Sudharmā assembly hall, all the forms of Kṛṣṇa would merge into a single form, and thus He would enter the hall surrounded (*parivāritaḥ*) by the Vṛṣṇis.

|| 10.70.18 ||

tatropavistaḥ paramāsane vibhur babhau sva-bhāsā kakubho 'vabhāsayan

vṛto nṛ-siṁhair yadubhir yadūttamo yathoḍu-rājo divi tārakā-gaṇaiḥ

TRANSLATION

As the almighty Supreme Lord would seat Himself upon His exalted throne there in the assembly hall, He shone with His unique effulgence, illuminating all the quarters of space. Surrounded by the Yadus, lions among men, that best of the Yadus appeared like the moon amidst many stars.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa was attended by the Yadus, who were lions among men (*nṛ-siṁhair*).

|| 10.70.19 ||

tatropamantriṇo rājan nānā-hāsya-rasair vibhum

upatasthur naṭācāryā nartakyas tāṇḍavaiḥ pṛthak

TRANSLATION

And there, O King, jesters would entertain the Lord by displaying various comic moods, expert entertainers would perform for Him, and female dancers would dance energetically.

COMMENTARY

Separate groups of jesters (*upamantriṇaḥ*), dancers and magicians (*naṭācāryāḥ*) performed one after the other for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure in the assembly of great kings.

|| 10.70.20 ||

mṛdaṅga-vīṇā-muraja- veṇu-tāla-dara-svanaiḥ

nanṛtur jagus tuṣṭuvuś ca sūta-māgadha-vandinaḥ

TRANSLATION

These performers would dance and sing to the sounds of mṛdaṅgas, vīṇās, murajas, flutes, cymbals and conchshells, while professional poets, chroniclers and panegyrists would recite the Lord's glories.

COMMENTARY

Some groups danced and others sang. The professional poets (*sūtas*) offered praises.

|| 10.70.21 ||

tatrāhur brāhmaṇāḥ kecid āsīnā brahma-vādinaḥ

pūrveṣāṁ puṇya-yaśasāṁ rājñāṁ cākathayan kathāḥ

TRANSLATION

Some brāhmaṇas sitting in that assembly hall would fluently chant Vedic mantras, while others recounted stories of past kings of pious renown.

COMMENTARY

The brāhmaṇas recited (*brāhmaṇāḥ āhur*) Vedic *mantras* and those expert at speaking (*vādinaḥ*) related stories of pious kings.

|| 10.70.22 ||

tatraikaḥ puruṣo rājann āgato 'pūrva-darśanaḥ

vijñāpito bhagavate pratīhāraiḥ praveśitaḥ

TRANSLATION

Once a certain person arrived in the assembly, O King, who had never been seen there before. The doorkeepers announced him to the Lord and then escorted him inside.

|| 10.70.23 ||

sa namaskṛtya kṛṣṇāya pareśāya kṛtāñjaliḥ rājñām

āvedayd duḥkhaṁ jarāsandha-nirodha-jam

TRANSLATION

That person bowed down to kṛṣṇa, the supreme personality of Godhead, and with joined palms he described to the Lord how a number of kings were suffering because Jarāsandha had imprisoned them.

|| 10.70.24 ||

ye ca dig-vijaye tasya sannatiṁ na yayur nṛpāḥ

prasahya ruddhās tenāsann ayute dve girivraje

TRANSLATION

Twenty thousand kings who had refused to submit absolutely to Jarāsandha during his world conquest had been forcibly imprisoned by him in the fortress named Girivraja.

COMMENTARY

This verse says that Jarāsandha imprisoned twenty-thousand kings in the Girivraja fort because they did not submit (*sannatim*) to him by paying taxes. The *Mahābhārata* explains that Jarāsandha wanted to please Mahā-bhairava by offering him 100,000 kings in a human sacrifice.

|| 10.70.25 ||

rājāna ūcuḥ

kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇāprameyātman prapanna-bhaya-bhañjana

vayaṁ tvāṁ śaraṇaṁ yāmo bhava-bhītāḥ pṛthag-dhiyaḥ

TRANSLATION

The kings said [as related through their messenger]: O Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, O immeasurable Soul, destroyer of fear for those surrendered to You ! Despite our separatist attitude, we have come to You for shelter out of fear of material existence.

COMMENTARY

Six verses (25-30) explain their request to Kṛṣṇa. First the kings took shelter, uttering "Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa!" twice out of respect. The word *aprameya-ātman* (immeasurable Soul) implies, "Though we do not understand Your true form, we know You are the protector of those who surrender (*prapanna*) unto You and therefore we surrender. Due to having a separate interest (*pṛthag-dhiyaḥ*) from You, however, we desired deliverance from our misery instead of praying for devotion to You."

|| 10.70.26 ||

loko vikarma-nirataḥ kuśale pramattaḥ

karmaṇy ayaṁ tvad-udite bhavad-arcane sve

yas tāvad asya balavān iha jīvitāśāṁ

sadyaś chinatty animiṣāya namo ’stu tasmai

TRANSLATION

People in this world are always engaged in sinful activities and are thus bewildered about their real duty, which is to worship You according to Your commandments. This activity would truly bring them good fortune. Let us offer our obeisances unto the all-powerful Lord, who appears as time and suddenly cuts down one’s stubborn hope for a long life in this world.

COMMENTARY

In this verse the kings offer respects while describing their fear of material existence. The kings said, “Persons like us are inattentive to activities for our own benefit (*kuśale*). Does this mean pious works? No, it means those actions suggested by You (*tvad-udite*). Does it mean the activities of mind and sense control, and the major and minor regulative principles which lead to the advancement of *jñāna-yoga*? No, we are inattentive to Your worship (*bhavad-arcane:tvad-bhajane*), which is the real treasure (*sve*) of everyone. Such worship relieves one of material miseries and bestows the transcendental pleasure of Your love.”

“Instead we are engaged in unlawful acts (*vikarma*), which produce material happiness from wives and children. Moreover such unfortunate souls as us never achieve any real happiness, because You appear as invincible time (*animiṣāya*) to suddenly shatter (*chinatty*) our hopes for long life. It is proper that we, who are not Your devotees, offer respects to You in Your form as time.”

|| 10.70.27 ||

loke bhavāñ jagad-inaḥ kalayāvatīrṇaḥ

sad-rakṣaṇāya khala-nigrahaṇāya cānyaḥ

kaścit tvadīyam atiyāti nideśam īśa

kiṁ vā janaḥ sva-kṛtam ṛcchati tan na vidmaḥ

TRANSLATION

You are the predominating Lord of the universe and have descended into this world with Your personal power to protect the saintly and suppress the wicked. We cannot understand, O Lord, how anyone can transgress Your law and still continue to enjoy the fruits of his work.

COMMENTARY

The kings said, “It is greatly astonishing to us why someone like Jarāsandha, who hates You and Your devotees, is not destroyed. O Lord of the universe (*jagad-inaḥ*)! You have descended along with Your elder brother Balarāma (*kalayā*) to protect the pious and destroy the evil.” According to the *Nānārtha-kośa* dictionary, the word *kalā* can mean either time, the act of impelling, or together with Baladeva.

“However, some wicked persons like Jarāsandha surpass Your law, persecute the devotees and protect the wicked. Though You have appeared to destroy evil men, are they happy and prosperous due to their past pious acts? And though You come to protect Your devotees, are they suffering now due to their past misdeeds? We cannot understand this. It should not be that the mundane law of *karma* should be more powerful than You.”

|| 10.70.28 ||

svapnāyitaṁ nṛpa-sukhaṁ para-tantram īśa

śaśvad-bhayena mṛtakena dhuraṁ vahāmaḥ

hitvā tad ātmani sukhaṁ tvad-anīha-labhyaṁ

kliśyāmahe ’ti-kṛpaṇās tava māyayeha

TRANSLATION

O Lord, with this corpselike body, always full of fear, we bear the burden of the relative happiness of kings, which is just like a dream. Thus we have rejected the real happiness of the soul, which comes by rendering selfless service to You. Being so very wretched, we simply suffer in this life under the spell of Your illusory energy.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa asked the kings, “Then are you My devotees or My enemies?”

The kings replied, “We are neither, but rather conditioned souls engulfed in the material world who have now surrendered to You.” That is the import of this verse.

The kings said, “The happiness which we derive from thinking ourselves kings (*nṛpa-sukham*) is dependent on our ministers, friends and troops. Such pleasure is temporary like a dream (*svapnāyitaṁ*). Actually, we are carrying a great burden (*dhuraṁ*) from our intense endeavors at alliance and war with our corpse like bodies that are filled with constant fear. Alas! How miserable we are because of not becoming free from material desires by taking shelter of You!”

“We gave up that happiness which is forever praised by all saintly persons, and not condemned by them like our kingly happiness. Spiritual happiness is innate within the self and not dependent on others. Such transcendental joy comes from You alone, not from gross material objects. It is obtained (*labhyaṁ*) by Your selfless devotees (*anīha:akiñcana-bhaktaiḥ*), but not by those who are full of lust. Abandoning that happiness, we wretched persons experience intense suffering (*kliśyāmahe*).”

|| 10.70.29 ||

tan no bhavān praṇata-śoka-harāṅghri-yugmo

baddhān viyuṅkṣva magadhāhvaya-karma-pāśāt

yo bhū-bhujo ’yuta-mataṅgaja-vīryam eko

bibhrad rurodha bhavane mṛga-rāḍ ivāvīḥ

TRANSLATION

Therefore, since Your feet relieve the sorrow of those who surrender to them, please release us prisoners from the shackles of karma, manifest as the King of Magadha. Wielding alone the prowess of ten thousand maddened elephants, he has locked us up in his house just as a lion captures sheep.

COMMENTARY

In this verse the kings pray that Kṛṣṇa will release them from the bondage of *karma* created by His *māyā*. The kings said, “Please release (*viyuṅkṣva:vimocaya*) us from the bondage of *karma* in the form of Jarāsandha.”

If Kṛṣṇa counters, “But you can get out of this bondage of Jarāsandha by yourselves,” the kings reply, “Having the power of ten thousand maddened elephants, Jarāsandha alone has imprisoned all of us kings, as a lion catches sheep.”

|| 10.70.30 ||

yo vai tvayā dvi-nava-kṛtva udātta-cakra

bhagno mṛdhe khalu bhavantam ananta-vīryam

jitvā nṛ-loka-nirataṁ sakṛd ūḍha-darpo

yuṣmat-prajā rujati no ’jita tad vidhehi

TRANSLATION

O wielder of the disc! Your strength is unlimited, and thus seventeen times You crushed Jarāsandha in battle. But then, absorbed in human affairs, You allowed him to defeat You once. Now he is so filled with pride that he dares to torment us, Your subjects. O unconquerable one, please rectify this situation.

COMMENTARY

"Your enemy, Jarāsandha, knowing that we have surrendered to You, now persecutes us even more day by day." That is expressed in this verse.

The kings said, "O you who hold the Sudarśana *cakra* high! In the eighteen battles Jarāsandha fought with You, he was defeated seventeen times. Only once he defeated You, who were absorbed in playing within the world of human beings (*nṛ-loka-niratam*). Then he swelled with pride and began persecuting us who are Your subjects. Therefore please do the needful in this matter?"

|| 10.70.31 ||

dūta uvāca

iti māgadha-saṁruddhā bhavad-darśana-kaṅkṣiṇaḥ

prapannāḥ pāda-mūlaṁ te dīnānāṁ śaṁ vidhīyatām

TRANSLATION

The messenger continued: This is the message of the kings imprisoned by Jarāsandha, who all hanker for Your audience, having surrendered to Your feet. Please bestow good fortune on these poor souls.

COMMENTARY

The messenger speaks this verse.

|| 10.70.32 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

rāja-dūte bruvaty evaṁ devarṣiḥ parama-dyutiḥ

bibhrat piṅga-jaṭā-bhāraṁ prādurāsīd yathā raviḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: When the kings' messenger had thus spoken, the sage of the demigods, Nārada, suddenly appeared. Bearing a mass of golden

matted locks on his head, the supremely effulgent sage entered like the brilliant sun.

|| 10.70.33 ||

taṁ dṛṣṭvā bhagavān kṛṣṇaḥ sarva-lokeśvareśvaraḥ

vavanda utthitaḥ śīrṣṇā sa-sabhyaḥ sānugo mudā

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa is the worshipable master of even planetary rulers like Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva, yet as soon as He saw that Nārada Muni had arrived, He joyfully stood up along with His ministers and secretaries to receive the great sage and offer His respectful obeisances by bowing His head.

|| 10.70.34 ||

sabhājayitvā vidhi-vat kṛtāsana-parigraham

babhāṣe sunṛtair vākyaiḥ śraddhayā tarpayan munim

TRANSLATION

After Nārada had accepted the seat offered to him, Lord Kṛṣṇa honored the sage according to scriptural injunctions and, gratifying him with His reverence, spoke the following truthful and pleasing words.

|| 10.70.35 ||

api svid adya lokānāṁ trayāṇām akuto-bhayam

nanu bhūyān bhagavato lokān paryaṭato guṇaḥ

TRANSLATION

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] It is certain that today the three worlds have attained freedom from all fear, for that is the influence of such a great personality as you, who travel at will throughout all the worlds.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “Since it is impossible for you to suffer any misfortune, it would be improper to ask about your well being. Therefore, I will ask you if the three worlds are now free from fear.”

“But,” Nārada might object, “How would I know this?”

Kṛṣṇa replied, “Your great quality as a powerful personality (*bhagavataḥ*) is that you wander everywhere. Thus from you one can obtain knowledge of the all the planets. For that reason I am inquiring from you.”

|| 10.70.36 ||

na hi te ’viditaṁ kiñcil lokeṣv īśvara-kartṛṣu

atha pṛcchāmahe yuṣmān pāṇḍavānāṁ cikīrṣitam

TRANSLATION

There is nothing unknown to you within God’s creation. Therefore please tell Us what the Pāṇḍavas intend to do.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “Nothing is unknown to you in all the worlds created by the Lord. That being so, I asked you what the Pāṇḍavas desire to do, since you know how Jarāsandha can be killed by Bhīma.”

|| 10.70.37 ||

śrī-nārada uvāca

dṛṣṭā māyā te bahuśo duratyayā māyā vibho viśva-sṛjaś ca māyinaḥ

bhūteṣu bhūmaṁś carataḥ sva-śaktibhir vahner iva cchanna-ruco na me ’dbhutam

TRANSLATION

Śrī Nārada said: I have seen many times the insurmountable power of Your Māyā, O almighty one, by which You bewilder even the creator of the universe, Brahmā. O all-encompassing Lord, it does not surprise me that You disguise Yourself by Your own energies while moving among the created beings, as a fire covers its own light with smoke.

COMMENTARY

Nāradaji said, “By Your own *māyā* You bewilder the three worlds. Therefore it is astonishing that You are asking about the fearlessness of the people there. But for one playing the role of an ordinary human being such pastimes of Yours are not amazing.” This is the idea expressed in this verse.

Nārada said, “I have seen many times Your insurmountable māyā by which You bewilder (*māyinaḥ*) even Brahmā (*viśva-sṛjas*). Furthermore, O all-pervading one, You are present within all created beings as the indwelling controller by Your potencies of *māyā* and Your form as Paramātma. I have come this time out of eagerness to see You covering up Your omniscience in Your human-like pastimes. Therefore it is not surprising for me that You ask such a question.”

|| 10.70.38 ||

tavehitaṁ ko ’rhati sādhu vedituṁ sva-māyayedaṁ sṛjato niyacchataḥ

yad vidyamānātmatayāvabhāsate tasmai namas te sva-vilakṣaṇātmane

TRANSLATION

Who can properly understand Your purpose? With Your material energy You expand and also withdraw this creation, which thus appears to have substantial existence. Obeisances to You, whose transcendental position is inconceivable.

COMMENTARY

Nārada said, “Morever, who can understand the intention (*ihitam*) of You who sometimes create and sometimes destroy the universe, which gets its life from You residing within it as the Paramātmā? Therefore I offer my respects to You whose unique nature and characteristics (*sva-vilakśaṇātmane*) are completely inconceivable.”

|| 10.70.39 ||

jīvasya yaḥ saṁsarato vimokṣaṇaṁ na jānato ’nartha-vahāc charīrataḥ

līlāvatāraiḥ sva-yaśaḥ pradīpakaṁ prājvālayat tvā tam ahaṁ prapadye

TRANSLATION

The living being caught in the cycle of birth and death does not know how he can be delivered from the material body, which brings him so much trouble. But You, the Supreme Lord, descend to this world in various personal forms, and by performing Your pastimes You illumine the soul’s path with the blazing torch of Your fame. Therefore I surrender unto You.

COMMENTARY

Nārada said, “Furthermore, if You say that it is proper to ask me about the fearlessness of the universe then I reply as follows. You kindle the flame of Your fame (*sva-yaśaḥ pradīpakaṁ*), and reveal Your true nature by appearing in various pastime incarnations to benefit the conditioned souls (*jīvasya*) who do not know how to become liberated from the bondage of the material body. Therefore I surrender unto You (*tva*). I see many people in this world bewildered by Your *māyā* and afflicted by fear. There are also many people who have become fearless by hearing and chanting about Your glories.” This was hinted at in the above three verses.

|| 10.70.40 ||

athāpy āśrāvaye brahma nara-loka-viḍambanam

rājñaḥ paitṛ-ṣvasreyasya bhaktasya ca cikīrṣitam

TRANSLATION

Nonetheless, O Supreme Truth playing the part of a human being, I shall tell You what Your devotee Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja, the son of Your father’s sister, intends to do.

COMMENTARY

Now Nārada answers Kṛṣṇa’s second question about the intentions of the Pāṇḍavas in five verses (41-45). Nārada said, “O Supreme Truth! O form of Brahman!” (Both *brahma* and *Brahman* readings are correct as they are alternatives of the vocative case). “Even though You know everything, I will tell (*āśrāvaye*), since You are imitating the characteristics of an ordinary human being (*nara-loka-viḍambanam*).”

This is an example of the literary ornament called (*vyatireka*), which means comparison of contrasting things. Thus, Nārada praises Kṛṣṇa’s expertise by citing the low qualities of the human being.

|| 10.70.41 ||

yakṣyati tvāṁ makhendreṇa rājasūyena pāṇḍavaḥ

pārameṣṭhya-kāmo nṛpatis tad bhavān anumodatām

TRANSLATION

Desiring unrivaled sovereignty, King Yudhiṣṭhira intends to worship You with the greatest fire sacrifice, the Rājasūya. Please bless his endeavor.

|| 10.70.42 ||

tasmin deva kratu-vare bhavantaṁ vai surādayaḥ

didṛkṣavaḥ sameṣyanti rājānaś ca yaśasvinaḥ

TRANSLATION

O Lord, exalted demigods and glorious kings, eager to see You, will all come to that best of sacrifices.

COMMENTARY

Nārada said, "You should not just give Your approval for the ceremony and remain here, but You should go there so they can see You."

|| 10.70.43 ||

śravaṇāt kīrtanād dhyānāt pūyante 'nte-vasāyinaḥ

tava brahma-mayasyeśa kim utekṣābhimarśinaḥ

TRANSLATION

O Lord, even outcastes are purified by hearing and chanting Your glories and meditating upon You, the Absolute Truth. What then to speak of those who see and touch You?

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa may ask, "But what purpose will they achieve by seeing Me?" Nārada Muni answers in this verse: "Even the outcastes become purified by hearing and chanting Your glories, what to speak of seeing You, the concentrated form of the Absolute Truth (*brahma-mayasya:brahma-ghana-mūrteḥ*)."

|| 10.70.44 ||

yasyāmalaṁ divi yaśaḥ prathitaṁ rasāyāṁ

bhūmau ca te bhuvana-maṅgala dig-vitānam

mandākinīti divi bhogavatīti cādho

gaṅgeti ceha caraṇāmbu punāti viśvam

TRANSLATION

My dear Lord, You are the symbol of everything auspicious. Your transcendental name and fame is spread like a canopy all over the universe, including the higher, middle and lower planetary systems. The transcendental water that washes Your lotus feet is known in the higher planetary systems as the Mandākinī River, in the lower planetary systems as the Bhogavatī and in this earthly planetary system as the Ganges. This sacred, transcendental water flows throughout the entire universe, purifying wherever it goes.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa asked, “Why are they so eager to see Me?”

Nārada replied, “Your fame, which is spread throughout heaven, earth and the subterreanean region like a canopy decorating the universal directions, purifies the whole universe. In the same way, the water which emanates from Your feet sanctifies the universe. They desire to see You because their minds have been purified.”

Or else, “You, whose fame and foot water purify the universe, have been invited to Yudhiṣṭhira’s sacrifice in order to sanctify everything.”

|| 10.70.45 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

tatra teṣv ātma-pakṣeṣv a- gṛṇatsu vijigīṣayā

vācaḥ peśaiḥ smayan bhṛtyam uddhavaṁ prāha keśavaḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: When His supporters, the Yādavas, objected to this proposal out of eagerness to defeat Jarāsandha, Lord Keśava turned to His servant Uddhava and, smiling, addressed him with fine words.

COMMENTARY

The assembled Yādavas, Kṛṣṇa’s allies, were not interested in Nārada’s proposal because they were intent on conquering Jarāsandha. Kṛṣṇa used skilful words to impress upon Uddhava His own desires in this matter. Kṛṣṇa smiled (*smayan*) because He was about to demonstrate Uddhava’s brilliant ability to give counsel in difficult situations.

|| 10.70.46 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

tvaṁ hi naḥ paramaṁ cakṣuḥ suhṛn mantrārtha-tattva-vit

athātra brūhy anuṣṭheyaṁ śraddadhmaḥ karavāma tat

TRANSLATION

The Personality of Godhead said: You are indeed Our best eye and closest friend, for you know perfectly the relative value of various kinds of counsel. Therefore please tell Us what should be done in this situation. We trust your judgment and shall do as you say.

|| 10.70.47 ||

ity upāmantrito bhartrā sarva-jñenāpi mugdha-vat

nideśaṁ śirasādhāya uddhavaḥ pratyabhāṣata

TRANSLATION

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Thus requested by his master, who, though omniscient, acted as if perplexed, Uddhava took this order upon his head and replied as follows.

Thus ends the commentary on the Seventieth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Lord Kṛṣṇa Travels to Indraprastha

|| 10.71.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

ity udīritam ākarṇya devaṛṣer uddhavo 'bravīt

sabhyānāṁ matam ājñāya kṛṣṇasya ca mahā-matiḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having thus heard the statements of Devarṣi Nārada, and understanding the opinions of both the assembly and Lord Kṛṣṇa, the great-minded Uddhava began to speak.

COMMENTARY

In this chapter, Kṛṣṇa accepts Uddhava's advice, and goes with His army and His beloved queens to Indraprastha [part of New Delhi], where He delights all the inhabitants.

Uddhava heard the statements and spoke after understanding the wishes of Kṛṣṇa, Nārada Muni, the assembly members, and the messenger from the imprisoned kings. Uddhava is very intelligent (*mahā-matiḥ*) because he could satisfy everyone by keeping their wishes intact. Specifically, Nārada wanted Kṛṣṇa to go to Indra-prastha to perform the Rājasūya sacrifice. The assembly and the messenger wanted Kṛṣṇa to kill Jarāsandha, and Kṛṣṇa wanted both.

|| 10.71.2 ||

śrī-uddhava uvāca

yad uktam ṛṣinā deva sācivyaṁ yakṣyatas tvayā

kāryaṁ paitṛ-ṣvasreyasya rakṣā ca śaraṇaiṣiṇām

TRANSLATION

Śrī Uddhava said: O Lord, as the sage advised, You should help Your cousin fulfill his plan for performing the Rājasūya sacrifice, and You should also protect the kings who are begging for Your shelter.

COMMENTARY

Uddhava said, “You should help Yudhiṣṭhira perform the sacrifice (*yakṣyataḥ*), which was mentioned by Nārada. You should also protect those who desire Your shelter by killing Jarāsandha, which is the opinion of the assembly and the messenger.”

|| 10.71.3 ||

yaṣṭavyam rājasūyena dik-cakra-jayinā vibho

ato jarā-suta-jaya ubhayārtho mato mama

TRANSLATION

Only one who has conquered all opponents in every direction can perform the Rājasūya sacrifice, O almighty one. Thus, in my opinion, conquering Jarāsandha will serve both purposes.

COMMENTARY

“The best strategy is that by which both purposes can be achieved by a single act.” That is expressed in this verse.

Uddhava said, “Both purposes, completion of the Rājasūya sacrifice and protecting the kings are accomplished by defeating Jarāsandha. After all, without conquering all the directions the Rājasūya sacrifice cannot occur, and without killing Jarāsandha one cannot conquer the directions. First You should accept the invitation to the Rājasūya sacrifice. The request to protect the kings, on the other hand, will be fulfilled as a secondary result of fulfilling that first request. In this way two aims will be achieved by a single act.”

|| 10.71.4 ||

asmākaṁ ca mahān artho hy etenaiva bhaviṣyati

yaśaś ca tava govinda rājño baddhān vimuñcataḥ

TRANSLATION

By this decision there will be great gain for us, and You will save the kings. Thus, Govinda, You will be glorified.

COMMENTARY

Uddhava said, “For us members of the assembly there is great gain in Your going to the Rājasūya sacrifice for Jarāsandha will be killed.”

|| 10.71.5 ||

sa vai durviṣaho rājā nāgāyuta-samo bale

balinām api cānyeṣāṁ bhīmaṁ sama-balaṁ vinā

TRANSLATION

The invincible King Jarāsandha is as strong as ten thousand elephants. Indeed, other powerful warriors cannot defeat him. Only Bhīma is equal to him in strength.

COMMENTARY

Seeing that the Yādavas were extremely eager to immediately kill Jarāsandha, Uddhava spoke this verse: “Other warriors may be stronger, but they cannot defeat Jarāsandha. Even though Bhīma is only equal in strength, he can kill Jarāsandha. I have previously deduced this from the *Jyotīr-rāga* and other astrological scriptures I learned from Bṛhaspati.”

|| 10.71.6 ||

dvai-rathe sa tu jetavyo mā śatākṣauhiṇī-yutaḥ

brāhmaṇyo ’bhyarthito viprair na pratyākhyāti karhicit

TRANSLATION

He will be defeated in a match of single chariots, not when he is with his hundred military divisions. Now, Jarāsandha is so devoted to brahminical culture that he never refuses requests from brāhmaṇas.

COMMENTARY

Uddhava said, “Jarāsandha should be defeated by Bhīma alone in single combat, because he cannot be defeated when he is joined by his army of one hundred *akṣauhiṇīs*.”

But how could Jarāsandha be persuaded to give up the support of his powerful army? Here Uddhava gives the clue: “Jarāsandha will never refuse a request from *brāhmaṇas*, since he is devoted to *brahminical* culture.”

|| 10.71.7 ||

brahma-veṣa-dharo gatvā taṁ bhikṣeta vṛkodaraḥ

hanişyati na sandeho dvai-rathe tava sannidhau

TRANSLATION

Bhīma should go to him disguised as a brāhmaṇa and beg charity. Thus he will obtain single combat with Jarāsandha, and in Your presence Bhīma will no doubt kill him.

COMMENTARY

Uddhava said, “Bhīma should beg as charity a one-to-one fight with Jarāsandha.”

Kṛṣṇa objected, “But since they are equal in strength, they are evenly matched and thus neither is likely to win over the other.”

Uddhava replied, “Therefore, if Bhīma fights in Your presence, he will be able to kill Jarāsandha.”

|| 10.71.8 ||

nimittaṁ paramı̄śasya viśva-sarga-nirodhayoḥ

hiraṇyagarbhaḥ śarvaś ca kālasyārūpiṇas tava

TRANSLATION

Even Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva act only as Your instruments in cosmic creation and annihilation, which are ultimately done by You, the Supreme Lord, in Your invisible aspect of time.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “But what will be the effect of My merely being present without doing anything?”

Uddhava replied, “Just as time alone creates and destroys the universe with Brahmā and Śiva merely acting as instruments, so You alone will be killing Jarāsandha simply by Your presence, and Bhīma will only be the instrument. Just as You do this for the glorification of Brahmā and Śiva, so You will act only for the purpose of bestowing fame on Bhīma.”

|| 10.71.9 ||

gāyanti te viśada-karma gṛheṣu devyo

rājñāṁ sva-śatru-vadham ātma-vimokṣaṇaṁ ca

gopyaś ca kuñjara-pater janakātmajāyāḥ

pitroś ca labdha-śaraṇā munayo vayaṁ ca

TRANSLATION

In their homes, the godly wives of the imprisoned kings sing of Your noble deeds—about how You will kill their husbands’ enemy and deliver them. The gopīs also sing Your glories—how You killed the enemy of the elephant king, Gajendra; the enemy of Sīta, daughter of Janaka; and the enemies of Your own parents as well. So also do the sages who have obtained Your shelter glorify You, as do we ourselves.

COMMENTARY

Though the devotees have already perfectly sung Your glories in punishing the wicked and protecting the righteous, now, in killing of Jarāsandha Your glories will be even greater. This is expressed in this verse.

Uddhava said, “The wives (*devyaḥ:patnyaḥ*) of the kings imprisoned by Jarāsandha sing about Your splendid activities in their homes. while taking care of children and performing other domestic chores. What are those activities? They sing about Your future killing of Jarāsandha and freeing of their husbands, having been informed of

this by the omniscient sages. When their children cry for their fathers, their mothers tell them, ‘Child, do not cry. Śrī Kṛṣṇa will save your father.”’

Uddhava gives an analogy. “It is just as the gopīs consoled one another by singing about the killing of their enemy Śaṅkhacūḍa and their deliverance from captivity: ‘O friends, be calm. Do not give up your lives by crying endlessly. That same one who saved us from the devouring tiger called Śaṅkhacūḍa, that same ocean of compassion will remember us and save us from the snake bite of time, which has brought the great calamity of separation from Him.’”

“Thus, in the same way You should protect these ladies and reunite them with their husbands by killing Jarāsandha. Then after completing the Rājasūya sacrifice, and while returning here You should secretly go to Vraja and save the gopīs by giving them Your company. Then we and others will sing Your glories.”

Having taken the opportunity, Uddhava gave the advice that was in his mind. Uddhava continued, “Moreover just as the wives and gopīs sing about You, the sages who have surrendered to You, the self-satisfied devotees and we, your *dāsya-bhaktas*, will also sing Your glories in the course of relishing our own relationships such as servitude. What are these glories? You killed the crocodile enemy of the king of elephants and delivered him. You killed Rāvaṇa, the enemy of Sītā, and Kaṁsa, the enemy of Your parents, and freed Vasudeva and Devakī.”

“O fellow *tapasvīs*! O friends, O ecstatic devotees! Just as Kṛṣṇa saved Gajendra from the crocodile, Sītā from Rāvaṇa, and Vasudeva and Devakī from Kaṁsa by bestowing His personal *darśana* and granting them the particular devotional service they hankered for, so He will grant the same to us.”

|| 10.71.10 ||

jarāsandha-vadhaḥ kṛṣṇa bhūry-arthāyopakalpate

prāyaḥ pāka-vipākena tava cābhimataḥ kratuḥ

TRANSLATION

O Kṛṣṇa, the killing of Jarāsandha, which is certainly a reaction of his past sins, will bring immense benefit. Indeed, it will make possible the sacrificial ceremony You desire.

COMMENTARY

Uddhava said, “Killing Jarāsandha will bring great benefits (*bhūry-artha*), namely protecting the kings; the killing of Śiśupāla and executing the Rājasūya sacrifice, which You desire to perform; and also the accomplishment of the goals which I have hinted at. With the completion of the Rājasūya sacrifice the kings will be saved as a result of their piety (*pāka*), and Jarāsandha will die as a result (*vipākena*) of his wickedness.”

The *Medinī* dictionary says “*Pāka* refers to ‘a consequence’ or ‘an infant’ and *vipāka* refers to ‘cooking,’ ‘perspiration,’ or ‘the contrary result of an action.” Uddhava used equivocal words (*pāka-vipākena*) so that the assembled Yādavas and Kauravas would not understand his intention. If we take the alternate reading of *pāpa-vipākena*, it means “due to the consequence of the sins of Śiśupāla and others, they would die.” The word *prāyaḥ* (certainly) is used to express conjecture.

|| 10.71.11 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

ity uddhava-vaco rājan sarvato-bhadram acyutam

devarṣir yadu-vṛddhāś ca kṛṣṇaś ca pratyapūjayan

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O King, Devarṣi Nārada, the Yadu elders and Lord Kṛṣṇa all welcomed Uddhava’s proposal, which was entirely auspicious and infallible.

COMMENTARY

The word *acyutam* (infallible) indicates that Uddhava’s proposal was “fortified by logical reasoning.” Furthermore, Śukadeva Gosvāmī specifically indicates by the term *yadu-vṛddhāḥ* that it was the senior members, not the junior ones, who welcomed the proposal. Young princes such as Aniruddha did not like Uddhava’s proposal, since they were eager to fight Jarāsandha’s army immediately.

|| 10.71.12 ||

athādiśat prayāṇāya bhagavān devakī-sutaḥ

bhṛtyān dāruka-jaitrādīn anujñāpya gurūn vibhuḥ

TRANSLATION

The almighty Personality of Godhead, the son of Devakī, begged His superiors for permission to leave. Then He ordered His servants, headed by Dāruka and Jaitra, to prepare for departure.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa took permission from the elders such as Vasudeva, and then ordered His servants to prepare for departure.

|| 10.71.13 ||

nirgamayyāvarodhān svān sa-sutān sa-paricchadān

saṅkarṣaṇam anujñāpya yadu-rājaṁ ca śatru-han

sūtopanītaṁ sva-ratham āruhad garuḍa-dhvajam

TRANSLATION

O slayer of enemies, after He had arranged for the departure of His wives, children and baggage and taken leave of Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa and King Ugrasena, Lord Kṛṣṇa mounted His chariot, which had been brought by His driver. It flew a flag marked with the emblem of Garuḍa.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa arranged for His wives (*avarodhān*) to go along, since they had also been invited to the Rājasūya sacrifice and were eager to attend. *Avarodhān* means those who reside in the women's quarters.

|| 10.71.14 ||

tato ratha-dvipa-bhaṭa-sādi-nāyakaiḥ karālayā parivṛta ātma-senayā

mṛdaṅga-bhery-ānaka-śaṅkha-gomukhaiḥ praghoṣa-ghoṣita-kakubho nirakramat

TRANSLATION

As the vibrations resounding from mṛdaṅgas, bherīs, kettledrums, conchshells and gomukhas filled the sky in all directions, Lord Kṛṣṇa set out on His journey. He was accompanied by the chief officers of His corps of chariots, elephants, infantry and cavalry and surrounded on all sides by His fierce personal guard.

COMMENTARY

Bhaṭa means infantry soldiers and *sādi* means cavalry. Together with the leaders of His chariot corps, and surrounded by His own fierce (*karālayā:tīvrayā*) army, Kṛṣṇa went out of the city wherein all the directions (*kakubhā*) were filled with musical vibrations of horns and *mṛdaṇgas*. *Kakubhā*, a feminine form, is also seen sometimes.

|| 10.71.15 ||

nṛ-vāji-kāñcana-śibikābhir acyutaṁ sahātmajāḥ patim anu su-vratā yayuḥ

varāmbarābharaṇa-vilepana-srajaḥ su-saṁvṛtā nṛbhir asi-carma-pāṇibhiḥ

TRANSLATION

Lord Acyuta's faithful wives, along with their children, followed the Lord on golden palanquins carried by powerful men. The queens were adorned with fine clothing, ornaments, fragrant oils and flower garlands, and they were surrounded on all sides by soldiers carrying swords and shields in their hands.

COMMENTARY

The faithful queens followed their husband in golden palanquins carried by powerful men (*nṛvāji*).

|| 10.71.16 ||

naroṣṭra-go-mahiṣa-kharāśvatary-anaḥ kareṇubhiḥ parijana-vāra-yoṣitaḥ

sv-alaṅkṛtāḥ kaṭa-kuṭi-kambalāmbarādy-upaskarā yayur adhiyujya sarvataḥ

TRANSLATION

On all sides proceeded finely adorned women-attendants of the royal household, as well as courtesans. They rode on palanquins and camels, bulls and buffalo, donkeys, mules, bullock carts and elephants. Their conveyances were fully loaded with grass tents, blankets, clothes and other items for the trip.

COMMENTARY

The term *parijana-vāra-yoṣitaḥ*, "attendants of the royal household" includes washerwomen and other helpers. The huts were made of *usīra* grass.

|| 10.71.17 ||

balaṁ bṛhad-dhvaja-paṭa-chatra-cāmarair

varāyudhābharaṇa-kirīṭa-varmabhiḥ

divāṁśubhis tumula-ravaṁ babhau raver

yathārṇavaḥ kṣubhita-timiṅgilormibhiḥ

TRANSLATION

The Lord's army boasted royal umbrellas, cāmara fans and huge flagpoles with waving banners. During the day the sun's rays reflected brightly from the soldiers' fine weapons, jewelry, helmets and armor. Thus Lord Kṛṣṇa's army, noisy with shouts and clatter, appeared like an ocean stirring with agitated waves and timiṅgila fish.

COMMENTARY

During the day the army shone with the rays of the sun, displaying the splendor of their weapons, jeweled helmets and glittering golden ornaments.

|| 10.71.18 ||

atho munir yadu-patinā sabhājitaḥ praṇamya taṁ hṛdi vidadhad vihāyasā

niśamya tad-vyavasitam āhṛtārhaṇo mukunda-sandaraśana-nirvṛtendriyaḥ

TRANSLATION

Honored by Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the chief of the Yadus, Nārada Muni bowed down to the Lord. All of Nārada's senses were satisfied by his meeting with Lord Kṛṣṇa. Thus, having heard the decision of the Lord and having been worshiped by Him, Nārada placed Him firmly within his heart and departed through the sky.

COMMENTARY

Nārada departed by the path of the sky (*vihāyasā*). Although the verb is missing, it is understood.

|| 10.71.19 ||

rāja-dūtam uvācedaṁ bhagavān prīṇayan girā

mā bhaiṣṭa dūta bhadraṁ vo ghātayiṣyāmi māgadham

TRANSLATION

With pleasing words the Lord addressed the messenger sent by the kings: “My dear messenger, I wish all good fortune to you. I shall arrange for the killing of King Magadha. Do not fear.”

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said to the messenger, “Do not fear. I will kill Jarāsandha.” The phrase *mā bhaiṣṭa*, “do not fear,” is in the plural because Kṛṣṇa is addressing both the messenger and the kings.

|| 10.71.20 ||

ity uktaḥ prasthito dūt yathā-vad avadan nṛpān

te ’pi sandarśanaṁ śaureḥ pratyaikṣan yan mumukṣavaḥ

TRANSLATION

Thus addressed, the messenger departed and accurately relayed the Lord’s message to the kings. Eager for freedom, they then waited expectantly for their meeting with Lord Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

The imprisoned kings eagerly waited for Kṛṣṇa to liberate them.

|| 10.71.21 ||

ānarta-sauvīra-marūṁs tīrtvā vinaśanaṁ hariḥ

girīn nadīr atīyāya pura-grāma-vrajākarān

TRANSLATION

As He traveled through the provinces of Ānarta, Sauvīra, Marudeśa and Vinaśana, Lord Hari crossed rivers and passed mountains, cities, villages, cow pastures and quarries.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa passed through the provinces of Ānarta, Sauvīra, Marū and Kurukṣetra (*vinaśanaṁ*), as He crossed mountains, rivers, cities, villages, pastures and quarries.

|| 10.71.22 ||

tato dṛṣadvatīṁ tīrtvā mukundo ’tha sarasvatīm

pañcālān atha matsyāṁś ca śakra-prastham athāgamat

TRANSLATION

After crossing the rivers Dṛṣadvatī and Sarasvatī, He passed through Pañcāla and Matsya and finally came to Indraprastha.

|| 10.71.23 ||

tam upāgatam ākarṇya prīto durdarśanaṁ nṛnām

ajāta-śatrur niragāt sopadhyāyaḥ suhṛd-vṛtaḥ

TRANSLATION

King Yudhiṣṭhira was delighted to hear that the Lord, whom human beings rarely see, had now arrived. Accompanied by his priests and dear associates, the King came out to meet Lord Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.71.24 ||

gīta-vāditra-ghoṣeṇa brahma-ghoṣeṇa bhūyasā

abhyayāt sa hṛṣīkeśaṁ prāṇāḥ prāṇam ivādṛtaḥ

TRANSLATION

As songs and musical instruments resounded along with the loud vibration of Vedic hymns, the King went forth with great reverence to meet Lord Hṛṣīkeśa, just as the senses go forth to meet the consciousness of life.

COMMENTARY

As the senses (*prāṇāḥ:indriyāṇi*) follow the life airs, Yudhiṣṭhira went out to meet Kṛṣṇa (*hṛṣīkeśa*, the Lord of the senses).

|| 10.71.25 ||

dṛṣṭvā viklinna-hṛdayaḥ kṛṣṇaṁ snehena pāṇḍavaḥ

cirād dṛṣṭaṁ priyatamaṁ sasvaje 'tha punaḥ punaḥ

TRANSLATION

The heart of King Yudhiṣṭhira melted with affection when he saw his dearmost friend, Lord Kṛṣṇa, after such a long separation, and he embraced the Lord again and again.

|| 10.71.26 ||

dorbhyāṁ pariṣvajya ramāmalālayaṁ mukunda-gātraṁ nṛ-patir hatāśubhaḥ

lebhe parāṁ nirvṛtim aśru-locano hṛṣyat-tanur vismṛta-loka-vibhramaḥ

TRANSLATION

The eternal form of Lord Kṛṣṇa is the everlasting residence of the goddess of fortune. As soon as King Yudhiṣṭhira embraced Him, the King became free of all the contamination of material existence. He immediately felt transcendental bliss and merged in an ocean of happiness. There were tears in his eyes, and his body shook due to ecstasy. He completely forgot that he was living in this material world.

COMMENTARY

He embraced the limbs of Mukunda, which are the faultless (*amala*) shelter of all beauty (*ramā*). By this he submerged in the bliss of prema, forgot all worldly pleasure (*loka-vibhramaḥ:loka-vilāsaḥ*), and crossed the ocean of birth and death.

|| 10.71.27 ||

taṁ mātuleyaṁ parirabhya nirvṛto bhīmaḥ smayan prema-jalākulendriyaḥ

yamau kirīṭī ca suhṛttamaṁ mudā pravṛddha-bāṣpāḥ parirebhire ’cyutam

TRANSLATION

Then Bhīma, his eyes brimming with tears, laughed with joy as he embraced his maternal cousin, Kṛṣṇa. Arjuna and the twins—Nakula and Sahadeva—also joyfully embraced their dearmost friend, the infallible Lord, and they cried profusely.

|| 10.71.28 ||

arjunena pariṣvakto yamābhyām abhivāditaḥ

brāhmaṇebhyo namaskṛtya vṛddhebhyaś ca yathārhataḥ

mānino mānayām āsa kuru-sṛñjaya-kaikayān

TRANSLATION

After Arjuna had embraced Him once more and Nakula and Sahadeva had offered Him their obeisances, Lord Kṛṣṇa bowed down to the brāhmaṇas and elders present, thus properly honoring the respectable members of the Kuru, Sṛñjaya and Kaikaya clans.

|| 10.71.29 ||

sūta-māgadha-gandharvā vandinaś copamantriṇaḥ

mṛdaṅga-śaṅkha-paṭaha vīṇā-paṇava-gomukhaiḥ

brāhmaṇāś cāravindākṣaṁ tuṣṭuvur nanṛtur jaguḥ

TRANSLATION

Sūtas, Māgadhas, Gandharvas, Vandīs, jesters and brāhmaṇas all glorified the lotus-eyed Lord—some reciting prayers, some dancing and singing—as mṛdaṅgas, conchshells, kettledrums, vīṇās, paṇavas and gomukhas resounded.

|| 10.71.30 ||

evaṁ suhṛdbhiḥ paryastaḥ puṇya-śloka-śikhāmaṇiḥ

saṁstūyamāno bhagavān viveśālaṅkṛtaṁ puram

TRANSLATION

Thus surrounded by His well-wishing relatives and praised on all sides, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the crest jewel of the justly renowned, entered the decorated city.

|| 10.71.31-32 ||

saṁsikta-vartma kariṇāṁ mada-gandha-toyaiś

citra-dhvajaiḥ kanaka-toraṇa-pūrṇa-kumbhaiḥ

mṛṣṭātmabhir nava-dukūla-vibhūṣaṇa-srag-

gandhair nṛbhir yuvatibhiś ca virājamānam

uddīpta-dīpa-balibhiḥ prati-sadma jāla

niryāta-dhūpa-ruciraṁ vilasat-patākam

mūrdhanya-hema-kalaśai rajatoru-śṛṅgair

juṣṭaṁ dadarśa bhavanaiḥ kuru-rāja-dhāma

TRANSLATION

The roads of Indraprastha were sprinkled with water perfumed by the liquid from elephants' foreheads, and colorful flags, golden gateways and full

waterpots enhanced the city's splendor. Men and young girls were beautifully arrayed in fine, new garments, adorned with flower garlands and ornaments, and anointed with aromatic sandalwood paste. Every home displayed glowing lamps and respectful offerings, and from the holes of the latticed windows drifted incense, further beautifying the city. Banners waved, and the roofs were decorated with golden domes on broad silver bases. Thus Lord Kṛṣṇa saw the royal city of the King of the Kurus.

COMMENTARY

The city of Indraprastha is described in two verses. Each house was splendid (*virājamānam*) with rows of flowers and burning lamps, colorful flags, full water pots and gold gateways, richly attired men and women, and clouds of fragrant incense streaming from the lattice windows. Kṛṣṇa saw the city and the many palaces and houses of the kings of the Kurus.

|| 10.71.33 ||

prāptaṁ niśamya nara-locana-pāna-pātram

autsukya-viślathita-keśa-dukūla-bandhāḥ

sadyo visṛjya gṛha-karma patīṁś ca talpe

draṣṭuṁ yayur yuvatayaḥ sma narendra-mārge

TRANSLATION

When the young women of the city heard that Lord Kṛṣṇa, the reservoir of pleasure for human eyes, had arrived, they hurriedly went onto the royal road to see Him. They abandoned their household duties and even left their husbands in bed, and in their eagerness the knots of their hair and garments came loose.

|| 10.71.34 ||

tasmin su-saṅkula ibhāśva-ratha-dvipadbhiḥ

kṛṣṇam sa-bhāryam upalabhya gṛhādhirūḍhāḥ

nāryo vikīrya kusumair manasopaguhya

su-svāgataṁ vidadhur utsmaya-vīkṣitena

TRANSLATION

The royal road being quite crowded with elephants, horses, chariots and foot soldiers, the women climbed to the top of their houses, where they caught sight of Lord Kṛṣṇa and His queens. The city ladies scattered flowers upon the

Lord, embraced Him in their minds and expressed their heartfelt welcome with broadly smiling glances.

|| 10.71.35 ||

ūcuḥ striyaḥ pathi nirīkṣya mukunda-patnīs

tārā yathoḍupa-sahāḥ kim akāry amūbhiḥ

yac cakṣuṣāṁ puruṣa-maulir udāra-hāsa

līlāvaloka-kalayotsavam ātanoti

TRANSLATION

Observing Lord Mukunda's wives passing on the road like stars accompanying the moon, the women exclaimed, "What have these ladies done so that the best of men bestows upon their eyes the joy of His generous smiles and playful sidelong glances?"

COMMENTARY

The women are like stars accompanying the moon (*uḍu-pa-sahāḥ*). What piety has been performed by them?

|| 10.71.36 ||

tatra tatropasaṅgamya paurā maṅgala-pāṇayaḥ

cakruḥ saparyāṁ kṛṣṇāya śreṇī-mukhyā hatainasaḥ

TRANSLATION

In various places citizens of the city came forward holding auspicious offerings for Lord Kṛṣṇa, and sinless leaders of occupational guilds came forward to worship the Lord.

COMMENTARY

The heads of the various communities (*sreṇī-mukhyā*), who earn their livings by particular arts, worshiped Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.71.37 ||

antaḥ-pura-janaiḥ prītyā mukundaḥ phulla-locanaiḥ

sa-sambhramair abhyupetaḥ prāviśad rāja-mandiram

TRANSLATION

With wide-open eyes, the members of the royal household came forward in a flurry to lovingly greet Lord Mukunda, and thus the Lord entered the royal palace.

|| 10.71.38 ||

pṛthā vilokya bhrātreyaṁ kṛṣṇaṁ tri-bhuvaneśvaram

prītātmotthāya paryaṅkāt sa-snuṣā pariṣasvaje

TRANSLATION

When Queen Pṛthā saw her nephew Kṛṣṇa, the master of the three worlds, her heart became filled with love. Rising from her couch with her daughter-in-law, she embraced the Lord.

|| 10.71.39 ||

govindaṁ gṛham ānīya deva-deveśam ādṛtaḥ

pūjāyāṁ nāvidat kṛtyaṁ pramodopahato nṛpaḥ

TRANSLATION

King Yudhiṣṭhira respectfully brought Lord Govinda, the Supreme God of gods, to his personal quarters. The King was so overcome with joy that he could not remember all the rituals of worship.

COMMENTARY

Overcome with joy, Yudhiṣṭhira forgot the proper details (*kṛtyam*) of worshiping Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.71.40 ||

pitṛ-svasur guru-strīṇāṁ kṛṣṇaś cakre 'bhivādanam

svayaṁ ca kṛṣṇayā rājan bhaginyā cābhivanditaḥ

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa bowed down to His aunt and the wives of His elders, O King, and then Draupadī and the Lord's sister bowed down to Him.

COMMENTARY

Draupadī (*kṛṣṇayā*) and Subhadrā then welcomed Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.71.41-42 ||

śvaśṛvā sañcoditā kṛṣṇā kṛṣṇa-patnīś ca sarvaśaḥ

ānarca rukmiṇīṁ satyāṁ bhadrāṁ jāmbavatīṁ tathā

kālindīṁ mitravindāṁ ca śaibyāṁ nāgnajitīṁ satīm

anyāś cābhyāgatā yās tu vāsaḥ-sraṅ-maṇḍanādibhiḥ

TRANSLATION

Encouraged by her mother-in-law, Draupadī worshiped all of Lord Kṛṣṇa's wives, including Rukmiṇī; Satyabhāmā; Bhadrā; Jāmbavatī; Kālindī; Mitravindā, the descendant of Śibi; the chaste Nāgnajitī; and the other queens of the Lord who were present. Draupadī honored them all with such gifts as clothing, flower garlands and jewelry.

COMMENTARY

Encouraged by her mother-in-law (*śvaṣṛvā*), Draupadī worshiped all of Kṛṣṇa's queens.

|| 10.71.43 ||

sukhaṁ nivāsayām āsa dharma-rājo janārdanam

sa-sainyaṁ sānugāmatyaṁ sa-bhāryaṁ ca navaṁ navam

TRANSLATION

King Yudhiṣṭhira arranged for Kṛṣṇa's rest and saw to it that all who came along with Him—namely His queens, soldiers, ministers and secretaries—were comfortably situated. He arranged that they would experience a new feature of reception every day while staying as guests of the Pāṇḍavas.

COMMENTARY

Yudhiṣṭhira arranged for Kṛṣṇa's stay there in such a way that each day was a new experience.

|| 10.71.44-45 ||

tarpayitvā khāṇḍavena vahniṁ phālguna-saṁyutaḥ

mocayitvā mayaṁ yena rājñe divyā sabhā kṛtā

uvāsa katicin māsān rājñaḥ priya-cikīrṣayā

viharan ratham āruhya phālgunena bhaṭair vṛtaḥ

TRANSLATION

Desiring to please King Yudhiṣṭhira, the Lord resided at Indraprastha for several months. During His stay, He and Arjuna satisfied the fire-god by offering him the Khāṇḍava forest, and they saved Maya Dānava, who then built King Yudhiṣṭhira a celestial assembly hall. The Lord also took the opportunity to go riding in His chariot in the company of Arjuna, surrounded by a retinue of soldiers.

COMMENTARY

While Kṛṣṇa resided in Indraprastha, He liberated Maya Dānava from the forest fire. Out of gratitude Maya Dānava built a celestial assembly hall for Yudhiṣṭhira. Although these events were already related in chapter fifty-eight, Śukadeva Gosvāmī repeats them due to his absorption in the topic.

The chronological sequence is as follows: Kṛṣṇa stayed in Indraprastha for the four months of the rainy season. During this time Kṛṣṇa burned the Khāṇḍava forest, won the Gāṇḍīva bow for Arjuna and obtained Kālindī while hunting. Then Kṛṣṇa returned to Dvārakā, married Kālindī, Bhadrā and other queens, killed Naraka and performed other deeds. Then Kṛṣṇa was invited to the Rājasūya sacrifice.

Thus ends the commentary on the Seventy-first Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Seventy-two

The Slaying of the Demon Jarāsandha

|| 10.72.1-2 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

ekadā tu sabhā-madhya āsthito munibhir vṛtaḥ

brāhmaṇaiḥ kṣatriyair vaiśyair bhrātṛbhiś ca yudhiṣṭhiraḥ

ācāryaiḥ kula-vṛddhaiś ca jñāti-sambandhi-bāndhavaiḥ

śṛṇvatām eva caiteṣām ābhāṣyedam uvāca ha

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: One day, as King Yudhiṣṭhira sat in the royal assembly surrounded by eminent sages, brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas and vaiśyas, and also by his brothers, spiritual masters, family elders, blood relations, in-laws and friends, he addressed Lord Kṛṣṇa as everyone listened.

COMMENTARY

In this chapter, Kṛṣṇa approves of Yudhiṣṭhira's plans, and deliberately taking his permission has Bhīma kill Jarāsandha. After sitting properly (*āsthitaḥ*) Yudhiṣṭhira inquired from Kṛṣṇa while others listened. The locative case is used for "the listeners" (*śṛṇvatām*) to emphasize that Yudhiṣṭhira was absorbed in speaking to Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.72.3 ||

śrī-yudhiṣṭhira uvāca

kratu-rājena govinda rājasūyena pāvanīḥ

yakṣye vibhūtīr bhavatas tat sampādaya naḥ prabho

TRANSLATION

Śrī Yudhiṣṭhira said: O Govinda, I desire to worship Your auspicious, opulent expansions by the Rājasūya sacrifice, the king of Vedic ceremonies. Please make our endeavor a success, my Lord.

COMMENTARY

Yudhiṣṭhira said, "I want to worship Your opulent expansions in this world like the demigods and other empowered beings (*vibhūtis*)." This statement hints that Yudhiṣṭhira is exclusively devoted to Kṛṣṇa, just like the great King Bharata. The word *pāvanīḥ* (purifying) means that by seeing Kṛṣṇa the demigods and sages being worshiped in the sacrifice will become purified. Yudhiṣṭhira implies by this that the Rājasūya should be performed so that they too can become all-successful.

|| 10.72.4 ||

tvat-pāduke avirataṁ pari ye caranti dhyāyanty abhadra-naśane śucayo gṛṇanti

vindanti te kamala-nābha bhavāpavargam āśāsate yadi ta āśiṣa īśa nānye

TRANSLATION

Purified persons who constantly serve, meditate upon and glorify Your shoes, which destroy everything inauspicious, are sure to obtain freedom from material existence, O lotus-naveled one. Even if they desire something in this world, they obtain it, whereas others—those who do not take shelter of You—are never satisfied, O Lord.

COMMENTARY

Yudhiṣṭhira said, "We feel no great urgency to perform the Rājasūya sacrifice, nor do we have any personal interest, because by Your boundless mercy we are already seeing Your lotus feet and relishing Your personal association. But in this world there are many evil persons who think You are not the Supreme Godhead but an ordinary human being. Or else they find fault with You and even criticize Your behavior. This is an arrow piercing our heart."

"Therefore, to extract this arrow from our heart we must call to this place—on the pretext of the Rājasūya—Brahmā, Śiva and other demigods, and the wise *brahmacārīs* residing in each of the fourteen planetary systems. When such an exalted

congregation has assembled, it will be incumbent upon them to arrange the *agra-pūjā*, the first worship for the most worthy person present. Then when they are directly shown that You, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the arrow piercing my heart will be removed." Yudhiṣṭhira expresses this in three verses. Dividing *pari* and *caranti* is poetic license.

Yudhiṣṭhira said, "Meditation on Your slippers destroys all inauspi-ciousness, including that of ignorance. Those desiring material enjoyment obtain that by worshiping You, but not those who do not worship You. Both fruitive workers (*karmīs*) and pure devotees worship Your lotus feet, but Your devotees never desire material results. What to speak of us, who have no material desires, having taken shelter of Your feet and directly seen You."

|| 10.72.5 ||

tad deva-deva bhavataś caraṇāravinda-

sevānubhāvam iha paśyatu loka eṣaḥ

ye tvāṁ bhajanti na bhajanty uta vobhayeṣāṁ

niṣṭhāṁ pradarśaya vibho kuru-sṛñjayānām

TRANSLATION

Therefore, O Lord of lords, let the people of this world see the power of devotional service rendered to Your lotus feet. Please show them, O almighty one, the position of those Kurus and Sṛñjayas who worship You, and the position of those who do not.

COMMENTARY

Yudhiṣṭhira said, "Therefore, when Your status as the Supreme Godhead has been established by the distinguished assembly headed by Brahmā, the people of earth will understand the power of serving Your lotus feet. Then to dispel their illusion, please show the positions of those Kurus and Sṛñjayas who worship You as God and those who do not worship You, thinking You to be a human being. If You give Your consent, this will be shown at the proposed sacrifice."

|| 10.72.6 ||

na brahmaṇaḥ sva-para-bheda-matis tava syāt

sarvātmanaḥ sama-dṛśaḥ sva-sukhānubhūteḥ

saṁsevatāṁ sura-taror iva te prasādaḥ

sevānurūpam udayo na viparyayo 'tra

TRANSLATION

Within Your mind there can be no such differentiation as "This one is mine, and that is another's," because You are the Supreme Absolute Truth, the Soul of all beings, always equipoised and enjoying transcendental happiness within Yourself. Just like the heavenly desire tree, You bless all who properly worship You, granting their desired fruits in proportion to the service they render You. There is nothing wrong in this.

COMMENTARY

If Kṛṣṇa were to ask, "But will I not be displaying malice if I show the superiority of those who are favorable to Me and the inferiority of those who are against Me?"

In this verse Yudhiṣṭhira replies, "You do not have a mentality of prejudice, distinguishing on the basis of "My side" and "the other side" (*sva para*), since You are the completely pure (*brāhmaṇaḥ*) Absolute Truth. Moreover, as the Supersoul dwelling within all living entities, You engage them all in their particular actions according to endless flow of their *karma*. You alone are the supreme controller, and without partiality (*sama-dṛśaḥ*) You give them good or bad results suitable to their acts. Since You relish the greatest joy (*sva-sukhānubhūti*) within Yourself, You have nothing to gain or lose in relation to conditioned souls. Rather, You reciprocate with them according to how they approach You."

Kṛṣṇa: "But then who are the recipients of My qualities of com-passion and generosity?"

Yudhiṣṭhira: "You show compassion (*prasādaḥ*) to those who worship You with their hearts. By cutting the bondage of their karma and giving them everything, even Your own self, You show Your generosity."

Kṛṣṇa: "But then do I not show some prejudice there?"

Yudhiṣṭhira: "You are just like the desire tree (*sura-taror*), which bestows its fruits upon those who take shelter of it, without considering one's faults or merits. You also show mercy to any one who serves You. Thus even though You remain impartial, You especially favor Your devotee, being controlled by his affection. As one is relatively disposed in favorable or unfavorable ways towards You, You respond favorably or unfavorably toward him."

|| 10.72.7 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

samyag vyavasitaṁ rājan bhavatā śatru-karśana

kalyāṇī yena te kīrtir lokān anubhaviṣyati

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: Your decision is perfect, O King, and thus your noble fame will spread to all the worlds, O tormentor of your enemies.

COMMENTARY

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said, “O great cloud showering the nectar of My glories! O king! Certainly you have My permission to perform the sacrifice.” Kṛṣṇa says this in the mood of being a normal human being. By addressing King Yudhiṣṭhira as *śatru-karśana*, “tormentor of enemies,” Kṛṣṇa is imparting to him the potency to conquer all the enemy kings and become world famous.

|| 10.72.8 ||

ṛṣīṇāṁ pitṛ-devānāṁ suhṛdām api naḥ prabho

sarveṣām api bhūtānām īpsitaḥ kratu-rāḍ ayam

TRANSLATION

Indeed, My lord, for the great sages, the forefathers and the demigods, for Our well-wishing friends and, indeed, for all living beings, the performance of this king of Vedic sacrifices is desirable.

|| 10.72.9 ||

vijitya nṛpatīn sarvān kṛtvā ca jagatīṁ vaśe

sambhṛtya sarva-sambhārān āharasva mahā-kratum

TRANSLATION

First conquer all kings, bring the earth under your control and collect all the required paraphernalia; then execute this great sacrifice.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “What do I or any one else need to do in this connection, since you yourself can easily arrange everything for the Rājasūya? After collecting the items you can perform (*āharasva*) the sacrifice.”

|| 10.72.10 ||

ete te bhrātaro rājaû loka-pālāṁśa-sambhavāḥ

jito ’smy ātmavatā te ’haṁ durjayo yo ’kṛtātmabhiḥ

TRANSLATION

These brothers of yours, O King, have taken birth as partial expansions of the demigods ruling various planets. And you are so self-controlled that you have conquered even Me, who am unconquerable for those who cannot control their senses.

COMMENTARY

Ātmavatā means “who has conquered his senses,” or else it means “for whom I Myself (*ātmā:aham*) am always present as his all-in-all.” Thus Kṛṣṇa is saying, “By such a person I have been conquered and brought under his control. I cannot be conquered by those who have not controlled their senses (*akṛta-ātmabhiḥ*).”

|| 10.72.11 ||

na kaścin mat-paraṁ loke tejasā yaśasā śriyā

vibhūtibhir vābhibhaved devo ’pi kim u pārthivaḥ

TRANSLATION

No one in this world, even a demigod—what to speak of an earthly king—can defeat My devotee with his strength, beauty, fame or riches.

COMMENTARY

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said, “With great confidence I declare that you should not fear defeat by the other side. Even if he is lacking some power. My devotee cannot be conquered by anyone; what then to speak of you?”

|| 10.72.12 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

niśamya bhagavad-gītaṁ prītaḥ phulla-mukhāmbujaḥ

bhrātṝn dig-vijaye ’yuṅkta viṣṇu-tejopabṛṁhitān

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Upon hearing these words sung by the Supreme Lord, King Yudhiṣṭhira became joyful, and his face blossomed like a lotus. Thus he sent forth his brothers, who were empowered with Lord Viṣṇu’s potency, to conquer all directions.

COMMENTARY

The *sandhi* of *tejaḥ* (potency) and *upabṛṁhitān* (fortified) is poetic license. Otherwise, the word can be taken as *tejaḥ* in which case there would be normal *sandhi* according to rule.

|| 10.72.13 ||

sahadevaṁ dakṣiṇasyām ādiśat saha sṛñjayaiḥ

diśi pratīcyāṁ nakulam udīcyāṁ savyasācinam

prācyāṁ vṛkodaraṁ matsyaiḥ kekayaiḥ saha madrakaiḥ

TRANSLATION

He sent Sahadeva to the south with the Sṛñjayas, Nakula to the west with the Matsyas, Arjuna to the north with the Kekayas, and Bhīma to the east with the Madrakas.

COMMENTARY

The connection of Nakula with the Matsyas as their helpers follows the principle of one group of warriors with each brother, even though there are two clans, the kekayas and Madrakas, mentioned in the last line.

|| 10.72.14 ||

te vijitya nṛpān vīrā ājahrur digbhya ojasā

ajāta-śatrave bhūri draviṇaṁ nṛpa yakṣyate

TRANSLATION

After defeating many kings with their prowess, these heroic brothers brought back abundant wealth for Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja, who was intent on performing the sacrifice, O King.

COMMENTARY

They brought back the wealth and gave it to Yudhiṣṭhira.

|| 10.72.15 ||

śrutvājitaṁ jarāsandhaṁ nṛpater dhyāyato hariḥ

āhopāyaṁ tam evādya uddhavo yam uvāca ha

TRANSLATION

When King Yudhiṣṭhira heard that Jarāsandha remained undefeated, he set to pondering, and then the primeval Lord, Hari, told him the means Uddhava had described for defeating Jarāsandha.

COMMENTARY

Hari, the original Lord (*ādyaḥ*), told him the means of conquering Jarāsandha.

|| 10.72.16 ||

bhīmaseno ’rjunaḥ kṛṣṇo brahma-linga-dharās trayaḥ

jagmur girivrajaṁ tāta bṛhadratha-suto yataḥ

TRANSLATION

Thus Bhīmasena, Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa disguised themselves as brāhmaṇas and went to Girivraja, my dear King, where the son of Bṛhadratha was to be found.

|| 10.72.17 ||

te gatvātithya-velāyāṁ gṛheṣu gṛha-medhinam

brahmaṇyaṁ samayāceran rājanyā brahma-liṅginaḥ

TRANSLATION

Disguised as brāhmaṇas, the royal warriors approached Jarāsandha at home during the appointed hour for receiving guests. They submitted their entreaty

to that dutiful householder, who was especially respectful to the brahminical class.

COMMENTARY

They begged from Jarāsandha at the time meant for ritual hospitality.

|| 10.72.18 ||

rājan viddhy atithīn prāptān arthino dūram āgatān

tan naḥ prayaccha bhadraṁ te yad vayaṁ kāmayāmahe

TRANSLATION

[Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna and Bhīma said:] O King, know us to be needy guests who have come to you from afar. We wish all good unto you. Please grant us whatever we desire.

|| 10.72.19 ||

kiṁ durmarṣaṁ titikṣūṇāṁ kim akāryam asādhubhiḥ

kiṁ na deyaṁ vadānyānāṁ kaḥ paraḥ sama-darśinām

TRANSLATION

What can the tolerant not bear? What will the wicked not do? What will the generous not give in charity? And who will those of equal vision see as an outsider?

COMMENTARY

Jarāsandha might be thinking, “What if you request my son, from whom separation would be intolerable?”

To this possible objection Kṛṣṇa and the Pāṇḍavas reply, “Nothing is intolerable for a tolerant person. We see the example of Daśaratha giving his son Rāma to Viśvāmītra.”

“But if the householder refuses you, then what is the result?”

They reply, “What cannot be done (*kim akāryam*) by one without principles?”

Similarly, Jarāsandha could object, “What if you ask me to give my body or my precious jewels and other ornaments, which are meant to be given to my sons, not to ordinary beggars?”

To this they reply, “For the generous, what is not to be donated in charity? In other words, everything is to be given. There are examples of such persons as Dadhīci, who gave his own body when requested by the demigods.”

Jarāsandha might also object that he could be giving charity to his enemies. To this his guests counter with the statement *kaḥ paraḥ sama-darśinām*: “For those with equal vision, who is a stranger?”

|| 10.72.20 ||

yo ’nityena śarīreṇa satāṁ geyaṁ yaśo dhruvam

nācinoti svayaṁ kalpaḥ sa vācyaḥ śocya eva saḥ

TRANSLATION

He indeed is to be censured and pitied who, though able to do so, fails to achieve with his temporary body the lasting fame glorified by great saints.

COMMENTARY

One is despicable if he does not gain (*na acinoti*) fame with this temporary body.

|| 10.72.21 ||

hariścandro rantideva uñchavṛttiḥ śibir baliḥ

vyādhaḥ kapoto bahavo hy adhruveṇa dhruvaṁ gatāḥ

TRANSLATION

Hariścandra, Rantideva, Uñchavṛtti Mudgala, Śibi, Bali, the legendary hunter and pigeon, and many others have attained the permanent by means of the impermanent.

COMMENTARY

To pay off his debts to Viśvāmītra, Hariścandra sold everything he had, including his wife and children. Yet even after attaining the status of a *caṇḍāla*, he did not become discouraged. Thus he went to heaven, together with all the inhabitants of Ayodhyā. After going without even water for forty-eight days Rantideva somehow obtai-ned some food and water. But when some beggars suddenly appea-red, he gave it all to

them. In this way Rantideva attained Brahma-loka. Mudgala followed the practice of gathering grains left behind in the fields (*uñcha-vṛttiḥ*) after the harvest. Yet still he was hospitable toward uninvited guests, even after his family had been suffering in poverty for six months. Thus he also went to Brahmaloka.

King Śibi attained heaven by giving his own flesh to a hawk in order to protect a pigeon who had taken shelter of him. Bali Mahārāja gained the Lord's personal association by giving all his property to Vāmanadeva when the Lord disguised Himself as a dwarf *brāhmaṇa*. A pigeon and his mate gave their own flesh to a hunter as a show of hospitality, and thus they were taken to heaven in a celestial airplane. Rising to the mode of goodness, the hunter understood their situation. He then became renounced, gave up hunting and went off to perform severe austerities. Becoming freed of all sins, he was promoted to heaven after he burned to death in a forest fire. Thus many personalities have attained enduring life (*dhruvaṁ gatāḥ*) on higher planets by sacrificing their temporary material bodies.

|| 10.72.22 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

svarair ākṛtibhis tāṁs tu prakoṣṭhair jyā-hatair api

rājanya-bandhūn vijñāya dṛṣṭa-pūrvān acintayat

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: From the sound of their voices, their physical stature and the marks of bowstrings on their forearms, Jarāsandha could tell that his guests were of the royal order. He began to think he had seen them somewhere before.

COMMENTARY

From the calluses on their forearms (*jyā-hatair*) caused by drawing bowstrings, as well as their deep voices and strong statures, Jarā-sandha recognized them as *kṣatriyas* or rather low-class *kṣatriyas* (*rājanya-bandhūn*), since they were begging in the disguise of *brāhmaṇas*. He had seen them before at the *svayam-vara* of Draupadī.

|| 10.72.23 ||

rājanya-bandhavo hy ete brahma-liṅgāni bibhrati

dadāni bhikṣitaṁ tebhya ātmānam api dustyajam

TRANSLATION

[Jarāsandha thought:] These are surely members of the royal order dressed as brāhmaṇas, but still I must grant their request for charity, even if they beg me for my own body.

|| 10.72.24-25 ||

baler nu śrūyate kīrtir vitatā dikṣv akalmaṣā

aiśvaryād bhraṁśitasyāpi vipra-vyājena viṣṇunā

śriyaṁ jihīrṣatendrasya viṣṇave dvija-rūpiṇe

jānann api mahīm prādād vāryamāṇo 'pi daitya-rāṭ

TRANSLATION

Indeed, the spotless glories of Bali Mahārāja are heard throughout the world. Lord Viṣṇu, wishing to recover Indra's opulence from Bali, appeared before him in the guise of a brāhmaṇa and made him fall from his powerful position. Though aware of the ruse and forbidden by his guru, Bali, king of the demons, still gave Viṣṇu the whole earth in charity.

COMMENTARY

"But what is to be gained by giving charity to cheaters?" This verse answers.

Jarāsandha thought, "Indeed (*nu*), the fame of Bali, who lost everything to Viṣṇu disguised as a dwarf *brāhmaṇa*, is heard and spread throughout the world."

Na is sometimes seen instead of *nu*. In that case the meaning is "Is not the fame of Bali heard and spread everywhere? Bali Mahārāja gave the earth to Vāmanadeva even though he knew He was Viṣṇu, and even though he was forbidden by Śukrācārya."

|| 10.72.26 ||

jīvatā brāhmaṇārthāya ko nv arthaḥ kṣatra-bandhunā

dehena patamānena nehatā vipulaṁ yaśaḥ

TRANSLATION

What is the use of an unqualified kṣatriya who goes on living but fails to gain everlasting glory by working with his perishable body for the benefit of brāhmaṇas?

COMMENTARY

Jarāsandha thought, “Of what use is the life of a fallen *kṣatriya* if he does not desire fame by donating his perishable (*patamānena*) body to the *brāhmaṇas*? Such a *kṣatriya* is useless.”

|| 10.72.27 ||

ity udāra-matiḥ prāha kṛṣṇārjuna-vṛkodarān

he viprā vriyatāṁ kāmo dadāmy ātma-śiro ’pi vaḥ

TRANSLATION

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Thus making up his mind, the generous Jarāsandha addressed Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna and Bhīma: “O learned brāhmaṇas, choose whatever you wish. I will give it to you, even if it is my own head.”

COMMENTARY

Thus considering, Jarāsandha spoke.

|| 10.72.28 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

yuddhaṁ no dehi rājendra dvandvaśo yadi manyase

yuddhārthino vayaṁ prāptā rājanyā nānya-kāṅkṣiṇaḥ

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord said: O exalted King, give us battle in the form of a duel, if you think it fitting. We are princes and have come to beg a fight. We have no other request to make of you.

|| 10.72.29 ||

asau vṛkodaraḥ pārthas tasya bhrātārjuno hy ayam

anayor mātuleyaṁ māṁ kṛṣṇaṁ jānīhi te ripum

TRANSLATION

Over there is Bhīma, son of Pṛthā, and this is his brother Arjuna. Know Me to be their maternal cousin, Kṛṣṇa, your enemy.

|| 10.72.30 ||

evam āvedito rājā jahāsoccaiḥ sma māgadhaḥ

āha cāmarṣito mandā yuddhaṁ tarhi dadāmi vaḥ

TRANSLATION

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Thus challenged, Magadharāja laughed out loud and contemptuously said, "All right, you fools, I'll give you a fight!"

COMMENTARY

Jarāsandha laughed because he felt satisfied within by seeing the humiliation of his enemies, who had come in the dress *brāhmaṇas*. Jarāsandha said, "O fools (*mandā*)! You weaklings! Why should you fight at all? I will give you my head. Your bravery is already destroyed by your dressing as *brāhmaṇas* begging charity. However, if you still have any courage, I will gladly fight with you."

Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning, intends the phrase *amarṣito mandāḥ* to read *amarsito amandāḥ*, which means that Kṛṣṇa and the Pāṇḍavas are *amandāḥ*, "never foolish." For that reason, they chose the best tactic for doing away once and for all with the cruel Jarāsandha.

|| 10.72.31 ||

na tvayā bhīruṇā yotsye yudhi viklava-tejasā

mathurāṁ sva-purīṁ tyaktvā samudraṁ śaraṇaṁ gataḥ

TRANSLATION

"But I will not fight with You, Kṛṣṇa, for You are a coward. Your strength abandoned You in the midst of battle, and You fled Your own capital of Mathurā to take shelter in the sea."

COMMENTARY

The actual meaning is: "I will not fight with You, who are fearless and very strong (*tvayā abhīruṇā*), as my heart is now distressed (*viklava-tejasā:vihvala-cetasa*). By Your own will You left Mathurā and went to live in Your house by the sea."

|| 10.72.32 ||

ayaṁ tu vayasātulyo nāti-sattvo na me samaḥ

arjuno na bhaved yoddhā bhīmas tulya-balo mama

TRANSLATION

“As for this one, Arjuna, he is not as old as I, nor is he very strong. Since he is no match for me, he should not be the contender. Bhīma, however, is as strong as I am.”

|| 10.72.33 ||

ity uktvā bhīmasenāya prādāya mahatīṁ gadām

dvitīyāṁ svayam ādāya nirjagāma purād bahiḥ

TRANSLATION

Having said this, Jarāsandha offered Bhīmasena a huge club, took up another himself and went outside the city.

COMMENTARY

“It is expected that I should satisfy you, my guest, so please accept this huge (*mahatīm*) club. I will be successful in this fight, however, even with the smaller club.” These words revealed Jarāsandha’s pride.

|| 10.72.34 ||

tataḥ samekhale vīrau saṁyuktāv itaretaram

jaghnatur vajra-kalpābhyāṁ gadābhyāṁ raṇa-durmadau

TRANSLATION

The two heroes thus began battling each other on the level fighting grounds outside the city. Maddened with the fury of combat, they struck each other with their lightning-bolt-like clubs.

COMMENTARY

In the fighting arena (*samekhale*) they struck each other with clubs.

|| 10.72.35 ||

maṇḍalāni vicitrāṇi savyaṁ dakṣiṇam eva ca

caratoḥ śuśubhe yuddhaṁ naṭayor iva raṅgiṇoḥ

TRANSLATION

As they skillfully circled left and right, like actors dancing on a stage, the fight presented a magnificent spectacle.

COMMENTARY

They moved from left to right (*maṇḍalāni*) like actors dancing on a stage. Both fighters were fearless and steady even in the rage of battle.

|| 10.72.36 ||

tataś caṭa-caṭā-śabdo vajra-niṣpesa-sannibhaḥ

gadayoḥ kṣiptayo rājan dantayor iva dantinoḥ

TRANSLATION

When Jarāsandha's and Bhīmasena's clubs loudly collided, O King, the sound was like the impact of the big tusks of two fighting elephants, or the crash of a thunderbolt in a flashing electrical storm.

COMMENTARY

Caṭa-caṭā is the onomatopoetic sound clubs make when striking against each other. It was like the cracking of lightning bolts or the clashing sound of the tusks of fighting elephants.

|| 10.72.37 ||

te vai gade bhuja-javena nipātyamāne

anyonyato 'ṁsa-kaṭi-pāda-karoru-jatrum

cūrṇī-babhūvatur upetya yathārka-śākhe

saṁyudhyator dviradayor iva dīpta-manvyoḥ

TRANSLATION

They swung their clubs at each other with such speed and force that as the clubs struck their shoulders, hips, feet, hands, thighs and collarbones, the weapons were crushed and broken like branches of arka trees with which two enraged elephants furiously attack each other.

COMMENTARY

Their anger was totally inflamed (*dīpta-manvyoḥ:uddīpta-kopayoḥ*). When the clubs contacted then opponent's shoulder or waist, they became crushed to powder.

|| 10.72.38 ||

itthaṁ tayoḥ prahatayor gadayor nṛ-vīrau

kruddhau sva-muṣṭibhir ayaḥ-sparaśair apiṣṭām

śabdas tayoḥ praharator ibhayor ivāsīn

nirghāta-vajra-paruṣas tala-tāḍanotthaḥ

TRANSLATION

Their clubs thus ruined, those great heroes among men angrily pummeled each other with their iron-hard fists. As they slapped each other, the sound resembled the crash of elephants colliding or harsh thunderclaps.

COMMENTARY

After breaking their clubs they pounded each other with their fists.

|| 10.72.39 ||

tayor evaṁ praharatoḥ sama-śikṣā-balaujasoḥ

nirviśeṣam abhūd yuddham akṣīṇa-javayor nṛpa

TRANSLATION

As they thus fought, this contest between opponents of equal training, strength and stamina reached no conclusion. And so they kept on fighting, O King, without any letup.

|| 10.72.40 ||

śatror janma-mṛtī vidvāñ jīvitaṁ ca jarā-kṛtam

pārtham āpyāyayan svena tejasācintayad dhariḥ

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa knew the secret of His enemy Jarāsandha's birth and death, and also how he had been given life by the demoness Jarā. Considering all this, Lord Kṛṣṇa imparted His special power to Bhīma.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa knew that Jarāsandha was born in two pieces, and that he could be killed by separating the pieces. Kṛṣṇa also knew that the witch named Jara had given Jarāsandha life by joining the two pieces. Empowering Bhīma with His own potency, Kṛṣṇa thought how to inform Bhīma that Jarāsandha was joined in two parts.

|| 10.72.41 ||

sañcintyārī-vadhopāyaṁ bhīmasyāmogha-darśanaḥ

darśayām āsa viṭapaṁ pāṭayann iva saṁjñayā

TRANSLATION

Having determined how to kill the enemy, that Lord of infallible vision made a sign to Bhīma by tearing in half a small branch of a tree.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa took a branch in His hand within the vision of Bhīma and made a gesture suggesting, "Just as I am tearing apart this branch, so you should tear him apart." *Iva* here means *eva* certainly.

|| 10.72.42 ||

tad vijñāya mahā-sattvo bhīmaḥ praharatāṁ varaḥ

gṛhītvā pādayoḥ śatruṁ pātayām āsa bhū-tale

TRANSLATION

Understanding this sign, mighty Bhīma, the best of fighters, seized his opponent by the feet and threw him to the ground.

|| 10.72.43 ||

ekam pādaṁ padākramya dorbhyām anyaṁ pragṛhya saḥ

gudataḥ pāṭayām āsa śākham iva mahā-gajaḥ

TRANSLATION

Bhīma pressed down on one leg with his foot while grabbing Jarāsandha's other leg in his hands, and just as a great elephant might break the branch of a tree, Bhīma tore Jarāsandha apart from the anus upward.

|| 10.72.44 ||

eka-pādoru-vṛṣaṇa-kaṭi-pṛṣṭha-stanāṁsake

eka-bāhv-akṣi-bhrū-karṇe śakale dadṛśuḥ prajāḥ

TRANSLATION

The King's subjects then saw him lying in two separate pieces, each with a single leg, thigh, testicle, hip, shoulder, arm, eye, eyebrow and ear, and with half a back and chest.

COMMENTARY

The citizens saw the two parts each with one leg, one arm and one ear.

|| 10.72.45 ||

hāhā-kāro mahān āsīn nihate magadheśvare

pūjayām āsatur bhīmaṁ parirabhya jayācyatau

TRANSLATION

Understanding this sign, mighty Bhīma, the best of fighters, seized his opponent by the feet and threw him to the ground.

|| 10.72.46 ||

sahadevaṁ tat-tanayaṁ bhagavān bhūta-bhāvanaḥ

abhyaṣiñcad ameyātmā magadhānāṁ patiṁ prabhuḥ

mocayām āsa rājanyān saṁruddhā māgadhena ye

TRANSLATION

The immeasurable Supreme Personality of Godhead, the sustainer and benefactor of all living beings, coronated Jarāsandha's son, Sahadeva, as the new ruler of the Magadhas. The Lord then freed all the kings Jarāsandha had imprisoned.

Thus ends the commentary on the Seventy-second Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Seventy-three

Lord Kṛṣṇa Blesses the Liberated Kings

|| 10.73.1-6 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

ayute dve śatāny aṣṭau niruddhā yudhi nirjitāḥ

te nirgatā giridroṇyāṁ malinā mala-vāsasaḥ

kṣut-kṣāmāḥ śuṣka-vadanāḥ saṁrodha-parikarśitāḥ

dadṛśus te ghana-śyāmaṁ pīta-kauśeya-vāsasam

śrīvatsāṅkaṁ catur-bāhuṁ padma-garbhāruṇekṣaṇam

cāru-prasanna-vadanaṁ sphuran-makara-kuṇḍalam

padma-hastaṁ gadā-śaṅkha rathāṅgair upalakṣitam

kirīṭa-hāra-kaṭaka- kaṭi-sūtrāṅgadāñcitam

bhrājad-vara-maṇi-grīvaṁ nivītaṁ vana-mālayā

pibanta iva cakṣurbhyāṁ lihanta iva jihvayā

jighranta iva nāsābhyāṁ rambhanta iva bāhubhiḥ

praṇemur hata-pāpmāno mūrdhabhiḥ pādayor hareḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Jarāsandha had defeated 20,800 kings in combat and thrown them into prison. As these kings emerged from the Giridroṇī fortress, they appeared dirty and shabbily dressed. They were emaciated by hunger, their faces were dried up, and they were greatly weakened by their long imprisonment.

The kings then beheld the Lord before them. His complexion was dark blue like the color of a cloud, and He wore a yellow silk garment. He was distinguished by the Śrīvatsa mark on His chest, His four mighty arms, the pinkish hue of His eyes, which resembled the whorl of a lotus, His lovely, cheerful face, His gleaming makara earrings and the lotus, club, conchshell and disc in His hands. A helmet, a jeweled necklace, a golden belt, and golden bracelets and armlets decorated His form, and on His neck He wore both the brilliant, precious Kaustubha gem and a garland of forest flowers. The kings seemed to drink His beauty with their eyes, lick Him with their tongues, relish His fragrance with their nostrils and embrace Him with their arms. Their past sins now eradicated, the kings all bowed down to Lord Hari, placing their heads at His feet.

COMMENTARY

In this chapter Kṛṣṇa frees the kings imprisoned by Jarāsandha. The kings were emaciated by thirst and aggrieved due to their long imprisonment. Upon leaving the prison the kings saw Kṛṣṇa, who mercifully revealed to them His effulgent personal form resplendent with the color of a fresh rain cloud. Kṛṣṇa's neck was adorned with a fragrant flower garland and His famous Kaustubha gem, which glowed brilliantly as the best of jewels. Seeing Kṛṣṇa's incomparable beauty the kings seemed to be (*iva*) embracing (*rambhantaḥ*) the Lord with their arms. Feeling most satisfied, the kings praised the Lord. Kṛṣṇa then blessed them with objects of enjoyment befitting kings and sent them off to their respective kingdoms. Śrī Kṛṣṇa then returned to Indraprastha.

|| 10.73.7 ||

kṛṣṇa-sandarśanāhlāda dhvasta-saṁrodhana-klamāḥ

praśaśaṁsur hṛṣīkeśaṁ gīrbhiḥ prāñjalayo nṛpāḥ

TRANSLATION

The ecstasy of beholding Lord Kṛṣṇa having dispelled the weariness of their imprisonment, the kings stood with joined palms and offered words of praise to that supreme master of the senses.

|| 10.73.8 ||

rājāna ūcuḥ

namas te deva-deveśa prapannārti-harāvyaya

prapannān pāhi naḥ kṛṣṇa nirviṇṇān ghora-saṁsṛteḥ

TRANSLATION

The kings said: Obeisances to You, O Lord of the ruling demigods, O destroyer of Your surrendered devotees' distress. Since we have surrendered to You, O inexhaustible Kṛṣṇa, please save us from this terrible material life, which has made us so despondent.

COMMENTARY

Deva-deveśa indicates Kṛṣṇa's supreme position as the Lord. The phrase *prapannārti-harā* (remover of the distress of the surrendered) indicates Kṛṣṇa's affection for His devotees. *Avyaya* (inexhaustible) expresses Kṛṣṇa's unchanging, transcendental nature.

|| 10.73.9 ||

nainaṁ nāthānusūyāmo māgadhaṁ madhusūdana

anugraho yad bhavato rājñāṁ rājya-cyutir vibho

TRANSLATION

O master, Madhusūdana, we do not blame this King of Magadha, since it is actually by Your mercy that kings fall from their royal position, O almighty Lord.

COMMENTARY

The kings said, "We do not find fault (*na anusūyāmo*) with Jarāsandha for usurping our kingdoms, because by this we have obtained Your mercy."

|| 10.73.10 ||

rājyaiśvarya-madonnaddho na śreyo vindate nṛpaḥ

tvan-māyā-mohito 'nityā manyate sampado 'calāḥ

TRANSLATION

Infatuated with his opulence and ruling power, a king loses all self-restraint and cannot obtain his true welfare. Thus bewildered by Your illusory energy, he imagines his temporary assets to be permanent.

COMMENTARY

In three verses the kings prove how losing a kingdom is due to the mercy of Kṛṣṇa. "With unrestrained (*unnaddhaḥ*) pride in his wealth and power, the king thinks his temporary wealth to be permanent."

|| 10.73.11 ||

rājyaiśvarya-madonnaddho na śreyo vindate nṛpaḥ

tvan-māyā-mohito 'nityā manyate sampado 'calāḥ

TRANSLATION

Infatuated with his opulence and ruling power, a king loses all self-restraint and cannot obtain his true welfare. Thus bewildered by Your illusory energy, he imagines his temporary assets to be permanent.

COMMENTARY

The kings said, "Furthermore, the wealth of kingdom and other things are not real wealth. Unintelligent persons (*ayuktāh: avivekinaḥ*) see the illusory (*māyām*) enjoyments arising from the transformations (*vaikārikīm*) of the sense objects such as sound, form and touch as real. Just as a fool sees see a mirage as water, although it is actually light, foolish kings see the distress arising from the objects of enjoyment as happiness."

|| 10.73.12-13 ||

vayaṁ purā śrī-mada-naṣṭa-dṛṣṭayo jigīṣayāsyā itaretara-spṛdhaḥ

ghnantaḥ prajāḥ svā ati-nirghṛṇāḥ prabho mṛtyuṁ puras tvāvigaṇayya durmadāḥ

ta eva kṛṣṇādya gabhīra-raṁhasā durante-vīryeṇa vicālitāḥ śriyaḥ

kālena tanvā bhavato 'nukampayā vinaṣṭa-darpāś caraṇau smarāma te

TRANSLATION

Previously, blinded by the intoxication of riches, we wanted to conquer this earth, and thus we fought one another to achieve victory, mercilessly harassing our own subjects. We arrogantly disregarded You, O Lord, who stood before us as death. But now, O Kṛṣṇa, that powerful form of Yours called time, moving mysteriously and irresistibly, has deprived us of our opulences.

Now that You have mercifully destroyed our pride, we beg simply to remember Your lotus feet.

COMMENTARY

The kings said, “We ourselves exemplify this. Wanting to conquer the earth (*āsyā*), we competed with each other, not seeing You standing before us as death. Previously we were intoxicated with pride, and today we have lost our power by the influence of time, which is none other than You. Please give us Your mercy so that we will always remember Your lotus feet. We realize that losing our kingdoms was all due to Your mercy.”

|| 10.73.14 ||

atho na rājyam mṛga-tṛṣṇi-rūpitaṁ dehena śaśvat patatā rujāṁ bhuvā

upāsitavyaṁ spṛhayāmahe vibho kriyā-phalaṁ pretya ca karṇa-rocanam

TRANSLATION

Never again will we hanker for a miragelike kingdom—a kingdom that must be slavishly served by this mortal body, which is simply a source of disease and suffering and which is declining at every moment. Nor, O almighty Lord, will we hanker to enjoy the heavenly fruits of pious work in the next life, since the promise of such rewards is simply an empty enticement for the ears.

COMMENTARY

The kings said, “Henceforth (*atha*) we no longer desire a beautiful (*rūpitam:sundarī-kṛtam*) kingdom, which is desired by men under the spell of illusion.” The accusative case is poetic license.

“These kingdoms have to be served by the body, which itself can be destroyed at any moment, and which is the home of disease (*rujāṁ bhuvā:roga-mandireṇa*). Such kingdoms only give sorrow. Moreover one who has acquired a kingdom is obliged to perform Aṣvamedha-yajñas and other costly sacrifices. Neither do we desire to attain Svargaloka (*kriyā-phalaṁ*), which only sounds pleasurable to the ears. Because of the continuous competition in heaven, like here on earth, there is no happiness there either.”

|| 10.73.15 ||

taṁ naḥ samādiśopāyaṁ yena te caraṇābjayoḥ

smṛtir yathā na viramed api saṁsaratām iha

TRANSLATION

Please tell us how we may constantly remember Your lotus feet, though we continue in the cycle of birth and death in this world.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa replies, “Then here just take the boon of *sāyujya-mukti*.”

“No, no,” they reply in this verse, “Please teach us the exact method that we can understand and execute by which we will never forget Your lotus feet? We have no desire to end the *saṁsāra*, nor do we desire that which is most sought after, namely *prema-bhakti.”* It is due to the rise of humility in them that they do not desire this.

“Nor do we even desire remembrance of You which is one limb of *bhakti* (*smaraṇam*). We only desire the means for such remem-brance.”

The kings do not use the term “please give it to us” (*dehi*) but rather say *samādiśa*, “please instruct us” which shows clearly the highest degree of qualities like humility, sense control, and freedom from material desire which are necessary qualifications for bhakti.

|| 10.73.16 ||

kṛṣṇāya vāsudevāya haraye paramātmane

praṇata-kleśa-nāśāya govindāya namo namaḥ

TRANSLATION

Again and again we offer our obeisances unto Lord Krishna, Hari, the son of Vasudeva. That Supreme Soul, Govinda, vanquishes the suffering of all who surrender to Him.

COMMENTARY

The kings laid down with all eight limbs touching the ground to offer respect to Kṛṣṇa. They then engaged in Kṛṣṇa *nāma-saṅkīrtana* (*kṛṣṇāya vāsudevāya, haraye, govindāya*) while requesting the Lord to mercifully teach them even though they were unqualified.

The kings sang, “We offer our repeated obeisances unto Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa, the original Personality of Godhead, who appeared from Vasudeva out of compassion for all living entities; to Hari, who delivers even the demons from the suffering of the material

world; to the Paramātmā, who appears as the Supersoul for the devotees in *sānta-rasa*, and as the source of supreme *prema* for the devotees in *dāsya-rasa*; to the destroyer of the miseries (*kleśa-nāśāya*), which create obstacles to *bhakti* for the *sādhaka-bhaktas* (*praṇata*); and to Govinda, who reaches out to (*vindate*) our senses (*gāḥ*) such as the eyes, ears and nose in order to give the nectar of His beauty, fragrance and sweet sounding voice."

|| 10.73.17 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

saṁstūyamāno bhagavān rājabhir mukta-bandhanaiḥ

tān āha karuṇas tāta śaraṇyaḥ ślakṣṇayā girā

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus the kings, now freed from bondage, glorified the Supreme Lord. Then, my dear Parīkṣit, that merciful bestower of shelter spoke to them in a gentle voice.

|| 10.73.18 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

adya prabhṛti vo bhūpā mayy ātmany akhileśvare

su-dṛḍhā jāyate bhaktir bāḍham āśaṁsitaṁ tathā

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: From now on, my dear kings, you will have firm devotion to Me, the Supreme Self and the Lord of all that be. I assure you this will come to pass, just as you desire.

COMMENTARY

By addressing the kings as *bhūpā*, "O rulers and nourishers of the earth" Kṛṣṇa implies, "Since you revealed your true nature as My devotees in your statement *taṁ naḥ samādiśopāyaṁ* (v.15), therefore you will nourish the entire earth by spreading upon it the nectar of the practice of bhakti. I promise (*bāḍham*) that just as you desired (*āśaṁsitaṁ*), your devotion will become very fixed. I will instruct and you will understand, practice, and then attain firm remembrance of Me. *Prema-bhakti* (*dṛḍhā-bhaktir*) will gradually appear from such uninterrupted remembrance. At the present time you will attain steadiness in practice (*sādhana*) and quickly attain (*jāyate*) the goal (*sādhya*). From today on (*adya prabhṛti*) you will experience ever fresh spiritual realizations."

|| 10.73.19 ||

diṣṭyā vyavasitaṁ bhūpā bhavanta ṛta-bhāṣiṇaḥ

śrīy-aiśvarya-madonnāhaṁ paśya unmādakaṁ nṛṇām

TRANSLATION

Fortunately you have come to the proper conclusion, my dear kings, and what you have spoken is true. I can see that human beings' lack of self-restraint, which arises from their intoxication with opulence and power, simply leads to madness.

COMMENTARY

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said, "You are very fortunate to have the resolve that devotional service alone should be performed. Most wordly kings are mad after sense enjoyment and bound by Māyā. From wealth (*śrī*) comes the concept of power (*aiśvarya*), from *aiśvarya* comes intoxication (*mada*), and from intoxication comes bondage (*unnāham*)." The word *paśya* (see) is a poetic form of *paśyami*.

|| 10.73.20 ||

haihayo nahuṣo veṇo rāvaṇo narako 'pare

śrī-madād bhraṁśitāḥ sthānād deva-daitya-nareśvarāḥ

TRANSLATION

Haihaya, Nahuṣa, Veṇa, Rāvaṇa, Naraka and many other rulers of demigods, men and demons fell from their elevated positions because of infatuation with material opulence.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, "Many kings have fallen from their positions (*sthānāt: sva-padāt*) due to the intoxication of wealth."

|| 10.73.21 ||

bhavanta etad vijñāya dehādy utpādyam anta-vat

māṁ yajanto 'dhvarair yuktāḥ prajā dharmeṇa rakṣyatha

TRANSLATION

Understanding that this material body and everything connected with it have a beginning and an end, worship Me by Vedic sacrifices, and with clear intelligence protect your subjects in accordance with the principles of religion.

COMMENTARY

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said, "You should observe the customs of ordinary society in accordance with My order."

|| 10.73.22 ||

santanvantaḥ prajā-tantūn sukhaṁ duḥkhaṁ bhavābhavau

prāptaṁ prāptaṁ ca sevanto mac-cittā vicariṣyatha

TRANSLATION

As you live your lives, begetting generations of progeny and encountering happiness and distress, birth and death, always keep your minds fixed on Me.

COMMENTARY

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said, "You should spend your time producing sons (*prajā-tantūn*), tolerating happiness and distress and encountering birth and death (*bhava-abhava*)." *Prāptam* (encountered) is not in the dual form because of the abundance of terms, so only one form remains according in the rule (*eka-śesa*).

|| 10.73.23 ||

udāsīnāś ca dehādāv ātmārāmā dhṛta-vratāḥ

mayy āveśya manaḥ samyaṅ mām ante brahma yāsyatha

TRANSLATION

Be detached from the body and everything connected to it. Remaining self-satisfied, steadfastly keep your vows while concentrating your minds fully on Me. In this way you will ultimately attain Me, the Supreme Absolute Truth.

|| 10.73.24 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

ity ādiśya nṛpān kṛṣṇo bhagavān bhuvaneśvaraḥ

teṣāṁ nyayuṅkta puruṣān striyo majjana-karmaṇi

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having thus instructed the kings, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the supreme master of all the worlds, engaged male and female servants in bathing and grooming them.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa engaged men and women in rubbing oil on the king's bodies, bathing them and other services.

|| 10.73.25 ||

saparyāṁ kārayām āsa sahadevena bhārata

naradevocitair vastrair bhūṣaṇaiḥ srag-vilepanaiḥ

TRANSLATION

O descendant of Bharata, the Lord then had King Sahadeva honor them with offerings of clothing, jewelry, garlands and sandalwood paste, all suitable for royalty.

|| 10.73.26 ||

bhojayitvā varānnena su-snātān samalaṅkṛtān

bhogaiś ca vividhair yuktāṁs tāmbūlādyair nṛpocitaiḥ

TRANSLATION

After they had been properly bathed and adorned, Lord Kṛṣṇa saw to it that they dined on excellent food. He also presented them with various items befitting the pleasure of kings, such as betel nut.

|| 10.73.27 ||

te pūjitā mukundena rājāno mṛṣṭa-kuṇḍalāḥ

virejur mocitāḥ kleśāt prāvṛḍ-ante yathā grahāḥ

TRANSLATION

Honored by Lord Mukunda and freed from tribulation, the kings shone splendidly, their earrings gleaming, just as the moon and other celestial bodies shine brilliantly in the sky at the end of the rainy season.

COMMENTARY

Now that they were relieved of their distress, the kings appeared resplendent like the moon and other planets (*grahāḥ*) after the rainy season.

|| 10.73.28 ||

rathān sad-aśvān āropya maṇi-kāñcana-bhūṣitān

prīṇayya sunṛtair vākyaiḥ sva-deśān pratyayāpayat

TRANSLATION

Then the Lord arranged for the kings to be seated on chariots drawn by fine horses and adorned with jewels and gold, and pleasing them with gracious words, He sent them off to their own kingdoms.

|| 10.73.29 ||

ta evaṁ mocitāḥ kṛcchrāt kṛṣṇena su-mahātmanā

yayus tam eva dhyāyantaḥ kṛtāni ca jagat-pateḥ

TRANSLATION

Thus liberated from all difficulty by Kṛṣṇa, the greatest of personalities, the kings departed, and as they went they thought only of Him, the Lord of the universe, and of His wonderful deeds.

|| 10.73.30 ||

jagaduḥ prakṛtibhyas te mahā-puruṣa-ceṣṭitam

yathānvaśāsad bhagavāṁs tathā cakrur atandritāḥ

TRANSLATION

The kings told their ministers and other associates what the Personality of Godhead had done, and then they diligently carried out the orders He had imparted to them.

|| 10.73.31 ||

jarāsandhaṁ ghātayitvā bhīmasenena keśavaḥ

pārthābhyāṁ saṁyutaḥ prāyāt sahadevena pūjitaḥ

TRANSLATION

Having arranged for Bhīmasena to kill Jarāsandha, Lord Keśava accepted worship from King Sahadeva and then departed with the two sons of Pṛthā.

|| 10.73.32 ||

gatvā te khāṇḍava-prasthaṁ śaṅkhān dadhmur jitārayaḥ

harṣayantaḥ sva-suhṛdo durhṛdāṁ cāsukhāvahāḥ

TRANSLATION

When they arrived at Indraprastha, the victorious heroes blew their conchshells, bringing joy to their well-wishing friends and sorrow to their enemies.

|| 10.73.33 ||

tac chrutvā prīta-manasa indraprastha-nivāsinaḥ

menire māgadhaṁ śāntaṁ rājā cāpta-manorathaḥ

TRANSLATION

The residents of Indraprastha were very pleased to hear that sound, for they understood that now the King of Magadha had been put to rest. King Yudhiṣṭhira felt that his desires were now fulfilled.

|| 10.73.34 ||

abhivandyātha rājānaṁ bhīmārjuna-janārdanāḥ

sarvam āśrāvayāṁ cakrur ātmanā yad anuṣṭhitam

TRANSLATION

Bhīma, Arjuna and Janārdana offered their respects to the King and informed him fully about what they had done.

|| 10.73.35 ||

niśamya dharma-rājas tat keśavenānukampitam

ānandāśru-kalāṁ muñcan premṇā novāca kiñcana

TRANSLATION

Upon hearing their account of the great favor Lord Keśava had mercifully shown him, King Dharmarāja shed tears of ecstasy. He felt such love that he could not say anything.

COMMENTARY

Stunned in bliss, Yudhiṣṭhira could not speak.

Thus ends the commentary on the Seventy-third Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

The Deliverance of Śiśupāla at the Rājasūya Sacrifice

|| 10.74.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

evaṁ yudhiṣṭhiro rājā jarāsandha-vadhaṁ vibhoḥ

kṛṣṇasya cānubhāvaṁ taṁ śrutvā prītas tam abravīt

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having thus heard of the killing of Jarāsandha, and also of almighty Kṛṣṇa's wonderful power, King Yudhiṣṭhira addressed the Lord as follows with great pleasure.

COMMENTARY

In this chapter the *brāhmaṇas* worship Kṛṣṇa with the *agra-pūjā* during the Rājasūya sacrifice, Kṛṣṇa beheads Śiśupāla, and Duryo-dhana's pride is injured. Hearing about the killing of Jarāsandha and the power of Kṛṣṇa, King Yudhiṣṭhira was pleased and spoke.

|| 10.74.2 ||

śrī-yudhiṣṭhira uvāca

ye syus trai-lokya-guravaḥ sarve lokā maheśvarāḥ

vahanti durlabhaṁ labdvā śirasaivānuśāsanam

TRANSLATION

Śrī Yudhiṣṭhira said: All the exalted spiritual masters of the three worlds, together with the inhabitants and rulers of the various planets, carry on their heads Your command, which is rarely obtained.

COMMENTARY

King Yudhiṣṭhira said, "The exalted spiritual masters of the three worlds like Sanaka, the directors of universal affairs like Brahmā, Śiva and Indra, and all the inhabitants of the planets carry Your orders upon their heads." By the phrase *durlabhaṁ labdvā* (rarely obtained) Yudhiṣṭhira implies that one receives Kṛṣṇa's orders only by great good fortune, and thus the king shows his respect.

|| 10.74.3 ||

sa bhavān aravindākṣo dīnānām īśa-māninām

dhatte 'nuśāsanaṁ bhūmaṁs tad atyanta-viḍambanam

TRANSLATION

That You, the lotus-eyed Supreme Lord, accept the orders of wretched fools who presume themselves rulers is a great pretense on Your part, O all-pervading one.

COMMENTARY

Yudhiṣṭhira said, "It is certainly a disgrace (*atyanta viḍambanam*) for us that You accept the orders of us low persons (*dīnānām*). People will mock us for making the Supreme Lord Himself our order carrier."

|| 10.74.4 ||

na hy ekasyādvitīyasya brahmaṇaḥ paramātmanaḥ

karmabhir vardhate tejo hrasate ca yathā raveḥ

TRANSLATION

But of course the power of the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Soul, the primeval one without a second, is neither increased nor diminished by His activities, any more than the sun's power is by its movements.

COMMENTARY

“Even though You execute the orders of *jīvas* like us, You do not suffer any loss of position.” That is expressed in this verse.

Yudhiṣṭhira said, “Because all Your forms are only the Lord with similar quality You are called one, *eka*. Because *māyā* and the *jīvas* are Your energies (*śaktis*) there is nothing different from You. Therefore You are called *ādvitīyasya*, without a second. Therefore, how is it possible for You to lose Your exalted position? Moreover though You are the all-pervading Absolute Truth (*brāhmaṇaḥ*), there is no reduction in Your position. Since You are the Supersoul (*paramātmanaḥ*) controlling all *jīvas*, You cannot possibly come under the regulation of such a jīva as myself.”

Yudhiṣṭhira makes this statement out of humility. In fact Kṛṣṇa is controlled by His devotees, but this does not diminish the Lord’s position in the least. Rather this is Kṛṣṇa’s greatest exaltation because it reveals the profound mercy of the Lord which He is always exhibiting. This is seen in such statements as *darśayaṁs tad-vidāṁ loka, ātmano bhṛtya-vaśyatām*, “The Supreme Lord exhibited how much He can be subdued by His devotees.” (SB 10.11.9) Yudhiṣṭhira’s words, “He is like the sun” (*yatha raveḥ*), implies that God never decreases His power, just as the sun shines on earth on the home of the dog eater as well as illuminating the home of the supreme demigod, Brahmā, on the top of Sumeru Mountain.

|| 10.74.5 ||

na vai te ’jita bhaktānāṁ mamāham iti mādhava

tvaṁ taveti ca nānā-dhīḥ paśūnām iva vaikṛtī

TRANSLATION

O unconquerable Mādhava, even Your devotees make no distinctions of “I” and “mine,” “you” and “yours,” for this is the perverted mentality of animals.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “Why are you not thinking that since I am thus the Supreme Lord, it is improper for Me to be engaging in such low activities?”

Yudhiṣṭhira answers in this verse: “O unconquerable one! Even Your devotees do not have the perverted (*vaikṛtī*) intelligence of ignorant men, who think like animals (*paśūnām*) in terms of “I and mine,” “You and yours,” and “Being vastly learned, I am the best and need not follow anyone’s order.” Nor do they think, “Because you have no scriptural knowledge you are a fool, and must render service to everyone else.”

Avaikṛtī is sometimes seen in the text instead of *vaikṛtī*. By this word Yudhiṣṭhira says, "Your devotees have no material mentality of making distinctions, and so their mentality is purely spiritual (*cin-mayī*). What then to speak of Your mentality?"

|| 10.74.6 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

ity uktvā yajñiye kāle vavre yuktān sa ṛtvijaḥ

kṛṣṇānumoditaḥ pārtho brāhmaṇān brahma-vādinaḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having said this, King Yudhiṣṭhira waited until the proper time for the sacrifice was at hand. Then with Lord Kṛṣṇa's permission he selected suitable priests, all expert authorities on the Vedas, to execute the sacrifice.

COMMENTARY

At the proper time for the sacrifice, namely spring, Yudhiṣṭhira took Kṛṣṇa's permission and appointed suitable *brāhmaṇas* to do it.

|| 10.74.7-9 ||

dvaipāyano bharadvājaḥ sumantur gotamo 'sitaḥ

vasiṣṭhaś cyavanaḥ kaṇvo maitreyaḥ kavaṣas tritaḥ

viśvāmitro vāmadevaḥ sumatir jaiminiḥ kratuḥ

pailaḥ parāśaro gargo vaiśampāyana eva ca

atharvā kaśyapo dhaumyo rāmo bhārgava āsuriḥ

vītihotro madhucchandā vīraseno 'kṛtavraṇaḥ

TRANSLATION

He selected Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana, Bharadvāja, Sumantu, Gotama and Asita, along with Vasiṣṭha, Cyavana, Kaṇva, Maitreya, Kavaṣa and Trita. He also selected Viśvāmitra, Vāmadeva, Sumati, Jaimini, Kratu, Paila and Parāśara, as well as Garga, Vaiśampāyana, Atharvā, Kaśyapa, Dhaumya, Rāma of the Bhārgavas, Āsuri, Vītihotra, Madhucchandā, Vīrasena and Akṛtavraṇa.

|| 10.74.10-11 ||

upahūtās tathā cānye droṇa-bhīṣma-kṛpādayaḥ

dhṛtarāṣṭraḥ saha-suto viduraś ca mahā-matiḥ

brāhmaṇāḥ kṣatriyā vaiśyāḥ śūdrā yajña-didṛkṣavaḥ

tatreyuḥ sarva-rājāno rājñāṁ prakṛtayo nṛpa

TRANSLATION

O King, others who were invited included Droṇa, Bhīṣma, Kṛpa, Dhṛtarāṣṭra with his sons, the wise Vidura, and many other brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas and śūdras, all eager to witness the sacrifice. Indeed, all the kings came there with their entourages.

|| 10.74.12 ||

tatas te deva-yajanaṁ brāhmaṇāḥ svarṇa-lāṅgalaiḥ

kṛṣṭvā tatra yathāmnāyaṁ dīkṣayāṁ cakrire nṛpam

TRANSLATION

The brāhmaṇa priests then plowed the sacrificial ground with golden plowshares and initiated King Yudhiṣṭhira for the sacrifice in accordance with the traditions set down by standard authorities.

COMMENTARY

The *brāhmaṇas* purified the sacrificial arena (*deva-yajanaṁ:yajña-bhūmim*) by plowing it with a golden plough and performing various rituals. They purified Yudhiṣṭhira through initiation.

|| 10.74.13-15 ||

haimāḥ kilopakaraṇā varuṇasya yathā purā

indrādayo loka-pālā viriñci-bhava-saṁyutāḥ

sa-gaṇāḥ siddha-gandharvā vidyādhara-mahoragāḥ

munayo yakṣa-rakṣāṁsi khaga-kinnara-cāraṇāḥ

rājānaś ca samāhūtā rāja-patnyaś ca sarvaśaḥ

rājasūyaṁ samīyuḥ sma rājñaḥ pāṇḍu-sutasya vai

menire kṛṣṇa-bhaktasya sūpapannam avismitāḥ

TRANSLATION

The utensils used in the sacrifice were made of gold, just as in the ancient Rājasūya performed by Lord Varuṇa. Indra, Brahmā, Śiva and many other planetary rulers; the Siddhas and Gandharvas with their entourage; the Vidyādharas; great serpents; sages; Yakṣas; Rākṣasas; celestial birds; Kinnaras; Cāraṇas; and earthly kings—all were invited, and indeed they all came from every direction to the Rājasūya sacrifice of King Yudhiṣṭhira, the son of Pāṇḍu. They were not in the least astonished to see the opulence of the sacrifice, since it was quite appropriate for a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

They were not astonished (*avismitāḥ*) to see the abundance of golden utensils as was previously seen in the ancient Rājasūya performed for Lord Varuṇa. They simply thought, “What is impossible for Kṛṣṇa’s devotee?”

|| 10.74.16 ||

ayājayan mahā-rājaṁ yājakā deva-varcasaḥ

rājasūyena vidhi-vat pracetasam ivāmarāḥ

TRANSLATION

The priests, as powerful as gods, performed the Rājasūya sacrifice for King Yudhiṣṭhira in accordance with the Vedic injunctions, just as the demigods had previously performed it for Varuṇa.

COMMENTARY

Just as the demigods performed Rājasūya of Varuṇa, so the priests performed the sacrifice for Yudhiṣṭhira.

|| 10.74.17 ||

sūtye ’hany avanī-pālo yājakān sadasas-patīn

apūjayan mahā-bhāgān yathā-vat su-samāhitaḥ

TRANSLATION

On the day of extracting the soma juice, King Yudhiṣṭhira properly and very attentively worshiped the priests and the most exalted personalities of the assembly.

COMMENTARY

Yudhiṣṭhira worshiped the priests on the day of extracting *soma* (*sūtye 'hany*).

|| 10.74.18 ||

sadasyāgryārhaṇārhaṁ vai vimṛśantaḥ sabhā-sadaḥ

nādhyagacchann anaikāntyāt sahadevas tadābravīt

TRANSLATION

The members of the assembly then pondered over who among them should be worshiped first, but since there were many personalities qualified for this honor, they were unable to decide. Finally Sahadeva spoke up.

COMMENTARY

The undecided members (*na adhyagacchan*) of the assembly were the less intelligent ones, and not such exalted personalities as Brahmā, Śiva and Dvaipāyana Vyāsadeva, who thought, "Since today no one is asking our opinion, why should we say anything? Furthermore, Sahadeva is here and he is renowned for his sharp skill in analyzing all sorts of circumstances. He can help appoint the person who is to be worshiped first. Only if he somehow fails to speak or cannot understand the situation will we speak up, despite no one's having inquired from us." Having made up their minds in this way, these great personalities remained silent.

|| 10.74.19 ||

arhati hy acyutaḥ śraiṣṭhyaṁ bhagavān sātvatāṁ patiḥ

eṣa vai devatāḥ sarvā deśa-kāla-dhanādayaḥ

TRANSLATION

[Sahadeva said:] Certainly it is Acyuta, the Supreme Personality of Godhead and chief of the Yādavas, who deserves the highest position. In truth, He Himself comprises all the demigods worshiped in sacrifice, along with such aspects of the worship as the sacred place, the time and the paraphernalia.

COMMENTARY

Sahadeva said, “Acyuta factually possesses supremacy (*śraiṣṭhyaṁ*) in both the absolute and relative sense. It goes without saying that Kṛṣṇa is supreme among all demigods, sacred places, time and wealth.”

|| 10.74.20-21 ||

yad-ātmakam idaṁ viśvaṁ kratavaś ca yad-ātmakāḥ

agnir āhutayo mantrā sāṅkhyaṁ yogaś ca yat-paraḥ

eka evādvitīyo ’sāv aitad-ātmyam idaṁ jagat

ātmanātmāśrayaḥ sabhyāḥ sṛjaty avati hanty ajaḥ

TRANSLATION

This entire universe is founded upon Him, as are the great sacrificial performances, with their sacred fires, oblations and mantras. Sāṅkhya and yoga both aim toward Him, the one without a second. O assembly members, that unborn Lord, relying solely on Himself, creates, maintains and destroys this cosmos by His personal energies, and thus the existence of this universe depends on Him alone.

COMMENTARY

Here Sahadeva expands on his previous statement: “Kṛṣṇa alone is the aim (*yat paraḥ*) of *jñāna* (*sāṅkhya*) and *aṣṭāṅga yoga*. Kṛṣṇa is *advitīyaḥ*, one without a second, and nothing is different from Him since He is one with everything (*aitad-ātmyam*). O members of the assembly, being His own shelter (*ātma-āśrayaḥ*) Kṛṣṇa is not dependent on anyone else. As the original unborn (*ajaḥ*) Lord, Kṛṣṇa creates, maintains and destroys (*sṛjaty avati hanty*) the universe. If you have differing opinions then present them and I will settle them.”

|| 10.74.22 ||

vividhānīha karmāṇi janayan yad-avekṣayā

īhate yad ayaṁ sarvaḥ śreyo dharmādi-lakṣaṇam

TRANSLATION

He creates the many activities of this world, and thus by His grace the whole world endeavors for the ideals of religiosity, economic development, sense gratification and liberation.

COMMENTARY

Sahadeva said, “By the mercy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa all the *karmic* activities of the entire world and their fruits as well are realized. For this reason alone it is proper to worship Him first. Furthermore, by Kṛṣṇa’s mercy alone on this earth planet (*iha:bhūr-loke*) (*avekṣayā: anugraheṇa*) one can perform austerities, *yoga* and other practices (*vividhānīha karmāṇi*) for self-realization. And from Kṛṣṇa alone all people gain auspicious results in pursuit of their *dharma*. Both the action and the result depend on Kṛṣṇa.”

|| 10.74.23 ||

tasmāt kṛṣṇāya mahate dīyatāṁ paramārhaṇam

evaṁ cet sarva-bhūtānām ātmanaś cārhaṇaṁ bhavet

TRANSLATION

Therefore we should give the highest honor to Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord. If we do so, we will be honoring all living beings and also our own selves.

|| 10.74.24 ||

sarva-bhūtātma-bhūtāya kṛṣṇāyānanya-darśine

deyaṁ śāntāya pūrṇāya dattasyānantyam icchatā

TRANSLATION

Anyone who wishes the honor he gives to be reciprocated infinitely should honor Kṛṣṇa, the perfectly peaceful and perfectly complete Soul of all beings, the Supreme Lord, who views nothing as separate from Himself.

COMMENTARY

Sahadeva said, “This principle applies not only to this time in this kingdom, but for all times in all places. Dwelling within all living beings, Kṛṣṇa sees nothing separate from Himself (*ānanya-darśine*).”

|| 10.74.25 ||

ity uktvā sahadevo ’bhūt tūṣṇīṁ kṛṣṇānubhāva-vit

tac chrutvā tuṣṭuvuḥ sarve sādhu sādhv iti sattamāḥ

TRANSLATION

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Having said this, Sahadeva, who understood Lord Kṛṣṇa's powers, fell silent. And having heard his words, all the saintly persons present congratulated him, exclaiming "Excellent! Excellent!"

|| 10.74.26 ||

śrutvā dvijeritaṁ rājā jñātvā hārdaṁ sabhā-sadām

samarhayad dhṛṣīkeśaṁ prītaḥ praṇaya-vihvalaḥ

TRANSLATION

The King was delighted to hear this pronouncement of the brāhmaṇas, from which he understood the mood of the entire assembly. Overwhelmed with love, he fully worshiped Lord Kṛṣṇa, the master of the senses.

COMMENTARY

Hearing the *brāhmaṇa's* pronouncement (*dvija-īritam*) *sādhu sādhu iti*, "excellent, excellent," Yudhiṣṭhira understood that the assembly approved, so he worshiped Kṛṣṇa.

A messenger from Yudhiṣṭhira said, "My dear Lord Kṛṣṇa, now You are absorbed in the duty of washing everyone's feet, which You have taken upon Yourself. But the king wants to demonstrate the truth, being very eager to wash the feet of You who are worthy of worship by all, including Brahmā and Śiva. Therefore, please quickly go there."

Yudhiṣṭhira then worshiped Hṛsīkeśaṁ (Kṛṣṇa), the attractor of all his senses, by bathing His feet. In loving anger Kṛṣṇa protested, "No, don't do this, don't do this!"

|| 10.74.27-28 ||

tat-pādāv avanijyāpaḥ śirasā loka-pāvanīḥ

sa-bhāryaḥ sānujāmātyaḥ sa-kuṭumbo vahan mudā

vāsobhiḥ pīta-kauṣeyair bhūṣaṇaiś ca mahā-dhanaiḥ

arhayitvāśru-pūrṇākṣo nāśakat samavekṣitum

TRANSLATION

After bathing Lord Kṛṣṇa's feet, Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira joyfully sprinkled the water upon his own head, and then upon the heads of his wife, brothers, other family members and ministers. That water purifies the whole world. As he honored the Lord with presentations of yellow silken garments and precious jeweled ornaments, the King's tear-filled eyes prevented him from looking directly at the Lord.

|| 10.74.29 ||

itthaṁ sabhājitaṁ vīkṣya sarve prāñjalayo janāḥ

namo jayeti nemus taṁ nipetuḥ puṣpa-vṛṣṭayaḥ

TRANSLATION

When they saw Lord Kṛṣṇa thus honored, nearly all who were present joined their palms reverentially, exclaiming "Obeisances to You! All victory to You!" and then bowed down to Him. Flowers rained down from above.

|| 10.74.30 ||

itthaṁ niśamya damaghoṣa-sutaḥ sva-pīṭhād

utthāya kṛṣṇa-guṇa-varṇana-jāta-manyuḥ

utkṣipya bāhum idam āha sadasy amarṣī

saṁśrāvayan bhagavate paruṣāṇy abhītaḥ

TRANSLATION

The intolerant son of Damaghoṣa became infuriated upon hearing the glorification of Lord Kṛṣṇa's transcendental qualities. He stood up from his seat and, angrily waving his arms, fearlessly spoke to the entire assembly the following harsh words against the Supreme Lord.

COMMENT RY

Śiśupāla's intention in keeping quiet during the worship and speaking only afterwards is herein revealed: Śiśupāla thought, "If I object before the worship and give many reasons why Kṛṣṇa is ineligible, I certainly cannot be defeated in argument. Upon hearing my points the assembly will stop worshiping Kṛṣṇa and worship a qualified person instead. Then the sacrifice will proceed properly. I will remain silent for now, but after Kṛṣṇa is worshiped I will establish His lack of qualification, and thus demonstrate how the sacrifice is now spoiled. After fulfilling my desire amidst cries of dismay, I will depart with my associates, allied kings, learned *brāhmaṇas* and relatives like Duryodhana."

In this regard the *smṛti* says: *apūjyā yatra pūjyante pūjyānāṁ ca vyatikramaḥ*, “In the place where those who are not to be worshiped are worshiped, there is offense to those who are actually worshipable.” There is also the following statement: *pratibadhnāti hi śreyaḥ pūjyapūjya-vyatikramaḥ*, “Improperly understanding who is to be worshiped and who is not to be worshiped will impede one’s progress in life.”

|| 10.74.31 ||

īśo duratyayaḥ kāla iti satyavatī śrutiḥ

vṛddhānām api yad buddhir bāla-vākyair vibhidyate

TRANSLATION

[Śiśupāla said:] The statement of the Vedas that time is the unavoidable controller of all has indeed been proven true, since the intelligence of wise elders has now become diverted by the words of a mere boy.

|| 10.74.32 ||

yūyaṁ pātra-vidāṁ śreṣṭhā mā mandhvaṁ bāla-bhāṣītam

sadasas-patayaḥ sarve kṛṣṇo yat sammato ’rhaṇe

TRANSLATION

O leaders of the assembly, you know best who is a fit candidate for being honored. Therefore you should not heed the words of a child when he claims that Kṛṣṇa deserves to be worshiped.

COMMENTARY

Śiśupāla said, “O leaders of the assembly! Do not accept the words of a child by which Kṛṣṇa was selected for the first worship.” According to the inspiration of Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning, there is another meaning to Śiśupāla’s statement. Speaking to Duryodhana and other members of the opposition, Śiśupāla said, “Do not regard these as a child’s words. They are factually the words of the *Vedas*.”

|| 10.74.33-34 ||

tapo-vidyā-vrata-dharān jñāna-vidhvasta-kalmaṣān

paramaṛṣīn brahma-niṣṭhāû loka-pālaiś ca pūjitān

sadas-patīn atikramya gopālaḥ kula-pāṁsanaḥ

yathā kākaḥ puroḍāśaṁ saparyāṁ katham arhati

TRANSLATION

How can you pass over the most exalted members of this assembly—topmost sages dedicated to the Absolute Truth endowed with powers of austerity, divine insight and strict adherence to severe vows, sanctified by knowledge and worshiped even by the rulers of the universe? How does this cowherd boy, the disgrace of His family, deserve your worship, any more than a crow deserves to eat the sacred puroḍāśa rice cake?

COMMENTARY

(Text 33) Śiśupāla is trying to win the assembly members over to his side by flattering them with words like *tapo-vidyā*.

(Text 34) Śiśupāla calls Kṛṣṇa a disgrace to His dynasty (*kula-pāṁsanaḥ*) because Kṛṣṇa killed His uncle Kaṁsa. But the word may also be analyzed as *ku-lapām aṁsana*, giving a totally different meaning. *Ku-lapāḥ* means those who criticize or engage in harmful gossip. The word *aṁsana*, derived from the verb *aṁsayati*, means "destroyer." Therefore *ku-lapām aṁsana* means Kṛṣṇa destroys those who speak ill words.

Similarly, Śiśupāla compared Kṛṣṇa to a crow with the words *yathā kākaḥ*. But these words may also be divided *yathā a-kākaḥ*. Then the meaning is that Kṛṣṇa, who is forever situated on the pure transcendental platform, is beyond all material happiness (*ka*) and misery (*āka*). Finally, Śisupāla was right in saying that Kṛṣṇa, who is completely transcendental to all material dualities, does not deserve merely the *puroḍāśa* rice cake offered to lesser demigods like Indra. Rather, Kṛṣṇa deserves the offering of one's very life and soul.

|| 10.74.35 ||

varṇāśrama-kulāpetaḥ sarva-dharma-bahiṣ-kṛtaḥ

svaira-vartī guṇair hīnaḥ saparyāṁ katham arhati

TRANSLATION

How does one who follows no principles of the social and spiritual orders or of family ethics, who has been excluded from all religious duties, who behaves whimsically, and who has no good qualities—how does such a person deserve to be worshiped?

COMMENTARY

Superficially, *varṇāśrama-kulāpetaḥ* means "He is a person who has transgressed (*apeta*) *varna*, *asrama* and *kula*." The other meaning is: Kṛṣṇa is the person obtained

(*itaḥ:prāptaḥ*) as a son by Vasudeva who was *varṇāśrama-kulāpāḥ*, a strict follower of the standards of *varṇa, āśrama* and *kula*.

By the phrase *sarva-dharma-bahiṣ-kṛtaḥ svaira*, Śiśupāla said, “He is devoid of all religious behavior and moves independently.” The

other meaning is: “Because Kṛṣṇa is the supreme controller He acts independently. He is beyond all the *guṇas* (material qualities) such as *sattva* because His nature is situated in pure transcendental goodness. How can such a person deserve mere ordinary worship? He is deserving of complete surrender by all.”

|| 10.74.36 ||

yayātinaiṣāṁ hi kulaṁ śaptaṁ sadbhir bahiṣ-kṛtam

vṛthā-pāna-rataṁ śaśvat saparyāṁ katham arhati

TRANSLATION

Yayāti cursed the dynasty of these Yādavas, and ever since then they have been ostracized by honest men and addicted to liquor. How, then, does Kṛṣṇa deserve to be worshiped?

COMMENTARY

The inner meaning of Śiśupāla’s words shows how he is glorifying Kṛṣṇa and His Yadu dynasty: “The Yadu dynasty was cursed by Yayāti but then reinstated by saintly persons. Therefore Kārtavīrya-arjuna and others became emperors.”

Outer meaning: “The Yadus are addicted (*ratam*) to wantonly (*vṛthā*) drinking (*pāna*) liquor.” The inner meaning is: “As rulers the Yadus have become absorbed in *pāna*, protecting the earth. Considering all this, how does Kṛṣṇa, the chief of the Yadus, deserve useless (*vṛthā*) worship? Rather, He deserves the most opulent worship.”

|| 10.74.37 ||

brahmarṣi-sevitān deśān hitvaite ’brahma-varcasam

samudraṁ durgam āśritya bādhante dasyavaḥ prajāḥ

TRANSLATION

These Yādavas have abandoned the holy lands inhabited by saintly sages and have instead taken shelter of a fortress in the sea, a place where no brahminical principles are observed. There, just like thieves, they harass their subjects.

COMMENTARY

Śiśupāla said, “These Yadus are thieves taking shelter in a fortress within the ocean called Dvārakā, which is devoid of brahminical potency. There they harass their subjects (*prajāḥ*).”

The alternate meaning is: “After abandoning the district of Mathurā because it provided no protecting fortress, they took shelter of a fortress within the sea called Dvārakā, which is full of brahminical potency (*ḅrahma-varcasam:brahma-tejo-mayam*). Now they suppress unlawful persons like us [Śiśupāla] who have been born (*jā*) with great power (*pra*).”

|| 10.74.38 ||

evam-ādīny abhadrāṇi babhāṣe naṣṭa-maṅgalaḥ

novāca kiñcid bhagavān yathā siṁhaḥ śivā-rutam

TRANSLATION

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Bereft of all good fortune, Śiśupāla spoke these and other insults. But the Supreme Lord said nothing, just as a lion ignores a jackal’s cry.

COMMENTARY

As a lion listens to jackals’ cries (*śivā-rutam*) without responding, Kṛṣṇa listened to Śiśupāla without replying.

The other meaning is: “As Nṛsiṁhadeva (*siṁhaḥ*) hears the prayers (*rutam:stutiṁ*) spoken by Śiva but remains silent because there is nothing more auspicious, Kṛṣṇa remained silent hearing those praises (unintended of course) from Śiśupāla.”

|| 10.74.39 ||

bhagavan-nindanaṁ śrutvā duḥsahaṁ tat sabhā-sadaḥ

karṇau pidhāya nirjagmuḥ śapantaś cedi-paṁ ruṣā

TRANSLATION

Upon hearing such intolerable blasphemy of the Lord, several members of the assembly covered their ears and walked out, angrily cursing the King of Cedi.

COMMENTARY

The assembly cursed Śiśupāla, “Oh Śiśupāla, you should immediately die!” and then left the hall.

|| 10.74.40 ||

nindāṁ bhagavataḥ śṛṇvaṁs tat-parasya janasya vā

tato nāpaiti yaḥ so ’pi yāty adhaḥ sukṛtāc cyutaḥ

TRANSLATION

Anyone who fails to immediately leave the place where he hears criticism of the Supreme Lord or His faithful devotee will certainly fall down, bereft of his pious credit.

COMMENTARY

This verse gives scriptural evidence supporting their leaving the hall.

|| 10.74.41 ||

tataḥ pāṇḍu-sutāḥ kruddhā matsya-kaikaya-sṛñjayāḥ

udāyudhāḥ samuttasthuḥ śiśupāla-jighāṁsavaḥ

TRANSLATION

Then the sons of Pāṇḍu became furious, and together with the warriors of the Matsya, Kaikaya and Sṛñjaya clans, they rose up from their seats with weapons poised, ready to kill Śiśupāla.

COMMENTARY

The sons of Pāṇḍu, headed by Bhīma, became very angry and suddenly sprang to their feet.

|| 10.74.42 ||

tataś caidyas tv asambhrānto jagṛhe khaḍga-carmaṇī

bhartsayan kṛṣṇa-pakṣīyān rājñaḥ sadasi bhārata

TRANSLATION

Undaunted, Śiśupāla then took up his sword and shield in the midst of all the assembled kings, O Bhārata, and hurled insults at those who sided with Lord Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.74.43 ||

tāvad utthāya bhagavān svān nivārya svayaṁ ruṣā

śiraḥ kṣurānta-cakreṇa jahāra patato ripoḥ

TRANSLATION

At that point the Supreme Lord stood up and checked His devotees. He then angrily sent forth His razor-sharp disc and severed the head of His enemy as he was attacking.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa's intention was as follows: "If I remain silent, then they will fight amongst each other and fill the sacrificial arena with blood. And if I mount My chariot and fight him with My army, then also this place will become contaminated by blood. Either way, the Rājasūya sacrifice of My dear most Yudhiṣṭhira will be spoiled. Reconciliation at this point is too difficult. Therefore this must be done." Deciding thus, Kṛṣṇa immediately stood up and cut off Śiśupāla's head with His razor-sharp disc in such a way that not a drop of blood fell within the sacrificial arena.

|| 10.74.44 ||

śabdaḥ kolāhalo 'thāsīc chiśupāle hate mahān

tasyānuyāyino bhūpā dudruvur jīvitaiṣiṇaḥ

TRANSLATION

When Śiśupāla was thus killed, a great roar and howl went up from the crowd. Taking advantage of that disturbance, the few kings who were supporters of Śiśupāla quickly left the assembly out of fear for their lives.

|| 10.74.45 ||

caidya-dehotthitaṁ jyotir vāsudevam upāviśat

paśyatāṁ sarva-bhūtānām ulkeva bhuvi khāc cyutā

TRANSLATION

An effulgent light rose from Śiśupāla's body and, as everyone watched, entered Lord Kṛṣṇa just like a meteor falling from the sky to the earth.

COMMENTARY

That effulgent light, containing the eternal spiritual body within it, rose in the sky all the way up to Vaikuṇṭha. After appreciating the non-difference of Vaikuṇṭha-nātha and Śrī Kṛṣṇa, it again merged with Kṛṣṇa, like a comet falling from the sky. Śiśupāla remained within Kṛṣṇa until the end of the Lord's earthly pastimes at Prabhāsa-kṣetra, and then returned to the side of his master, the Supreme Lord of Vaikuṇṭha. The popular view however is that Śiśupāla achieved impersonal liberation by merging into Kṛṣṇa's bodily effulgence (*sāyujya-muktī*).

|| 10.74.46 ||

janma-trayānuguṇita-vaira-saṁrabdhayā dhiyā

dhyāyaṁs tan-mayatāṁ yāto bhāvo hi bhava-kāraṇam

TRANSLATION

Obsessed with hatred of Lord Kṛṣṇa throughout three lifetimes, Śiśupāla attained the Lord's transcendental nature. Indeed, one's consciousness determines one's future birth.

COMMENTARY

This verse answers the question, "How could such a blasphemer enter into Lord Vāsudeva?" By absorbing his thoughts in enmity of the Lord for three births, Śiśupāla attained a similar form as the Lord. This means that he regained his position as a personal asso-ciate of the Lord in Vaikuṇṭha. The reason is given: one's thoughts (*bhāvaḥ*) are the cause of attaining (*bhava-kāraṇam*) the next body. In this connection, the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (SB 7.1.47) states:

> *vairānubandha-tīvreṇa dhyānenācyuta-sātmatām*
>
> *nītau punar hareḥ pārśvaṁ jagmatur viṣṇu-pārṣadau*
>
> "These two associates of Lord Viṣṇu—Jaya and Vijaya—maintained a feeling of enmity for a very long time. Because of always thinking of Kṛṣṇa in this way, they regained the shelter of the Lord, having returned home, back to Godhead."

|| 10.74.47 ||

ṛtvigbhyaḥ sa-sadasyebhyo dakṣināṁ vipulām adāt

sarvān sampūjya vidhi-vac cakre 'vabhṛtham eka-rāṭ

TRANSLATION

Emperor Yudhiṣṭhira gave generous gifts to the sacrificial priests and the members of the assembly, properly honoring them all in the manner prescribed by the Vedas. He then took the avabhṛtha bath.

|| 10.74.48 ||

sādhayitvā kratuḥ rājñaḥ kṛṣṇo yogeśvareśvaraḥ

uvāsa katicin māsān suhṛdbhir abhiyācitaḥ

TRANSLATION

Thus Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of all masters of mystic yoga, saw to the successful execution of this great sacrifice on behalf of King Yudhiṣṭhira. Afterwards, the Lord stayed with His intimate friends for a few months at their earnest request.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa is the Lord of all lords of *yoga* (*yogeśvaresvaraḥ*) such as Śiva. Out of great love for Yudhiṣṭhira, however, Kṛṣṇa became controlled by him and thus obeyed his command. Kṛṣṇa personally arranged all the details of the Rājasūya sacrifice.

|| 10.74.49 ||

tato 'nujñāpya rājānam anicchantam apīśvaraḥ

yayau sa-bhāryaḥ sāmātyaḥ sva-puraṁ devakī-sutaḥ

TRANSLATION

Then the Lord, the son of Devakī, took the reluctant permission of the King and returned to His capital with His wives and ministers.

|| 10.74.50 ||

varṇitaṁ tad upākhyānaṁ mayā te bahu-vistaram

vaikuṇṭha-vāsinor janma vipra-śāpāt punaḥ punaḥ

TRANSLATION

I have already described to you in detail the history of the two residents of Vaikuṇṭha who had to undergo repeated births in the material world because of being cursed by brāhmaṇas.

|| 10.74.51 ||

rājasūyāvabhṛthyena snāto rājā yudhiṣṭhiraḥ

brahma-kṣatra-sabhā-madhye śuśubhe sura-rāḍ iva

TRANSLATION

Purified in the final, avabhṛthya ritual, which marked the successful completion of the Rājasūya sacrifice, King Yudhiṣṭhira shone among the assembled brāhmaṇas and kṣatriyas like the King of the demigods himself.

|| 10.74.52 ||

rājñā sabhājitāḥ sarve sura-mānava-khecarāḥ

kṛṣṇaṁ kratuṁ ca śaṁsantaḥ sva-dhāmāni yayur mudā

TRANSLATION

The demigods, humans and residents of intermediate heavens, all properly honored by the King, happily set off for their respective domains while singing the praises of Lord Kṛṣṇa and the great sacrifice.

|| 10.74.53 ||

duryodhanam ṛte pāpaṁ kaliṁ kuru-kulāmayam

yo na sehe śrīyaṁ sphītāṁ dṛṣṭvā pāṇḍu-sutasya tām

TRANSLATION

[All were satisfied] except sinful Duryodhana, the personification of the age of quarrel and the disease of the Kuru dynasty. He could not bear to see the flourishing opulence of the son of Pāṇḍu.

|| 10.74.54 ||

ya idaṁ kīrtayed viṣṇoḥ karma caidya-vadhādikam

rāja-mokṣaṁ vitānaṁ ca sarva-pāpaiḥ pramucyate

TRANSLATION

One who recites these activities of Lord Viṣṇu, including the killing of Śiśupāla, the deliverance of the kings and the performance of the Rājasūya sacrifice, is freed from all sins.

COMMENTARY

The word *vitānaṁ* means sacrifice.

Thus ends the commentary on the Seventy-fourth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Duryodhana Humiliated

|| 10.75.1 ||

śrī-rājovāca

ajāta-śatros tam dṛṣṭvā rājasūya-mahodayam

sarve mumudire brahman nṛ-devā ye samāgatāḥ

duryodhanaṁ varjayitvā rājānaḥ sarṣayaḥ surāḥ

iti śrutaṁ no bhagavaṁs tatra kāraṇam ucyatām

TRANSLATION

Mahārāja Parīkṣit said: O brāhmaṇa, according to what I have heard from you, all the assembled kings, sages and demigods were delighted to see the wonderful festivities of King Ajātaśatru's Rājasūya sacrifice, with the sole exception of Duryodhana. Please tell me why this was so, my lord.

COMMENTARY

This chapter describes the details of the Rājasūya sacrifice. After the sacrifice Yudhiṣṭhira took the *avabhṛtha* bath with Draupadī. At that time Duryodhana, being the object of joking, felt offended and became angry.

Parīkṣit Mahārāja said, "Please tell me why everyone except Duryodhana was pleased?" Śukadeva already mentioned that Duryodhana was envious (*yo na sehe*

srīyaṁ sphītāṁ SB 10.74.53). That was one reason why he was not pleased. Śukadeva wanted to describe another reason as it arose in his mind which he had not previously mentioned. Now he describes the supplementary part of the sacrifice, looking backwards so to speak, since he already described the completion of the sacrifice and the departure of the guests.

|| 10.75.3 ||

śrī-bādarāyaṇir uvāca

pitāmahasya te yajñe rājasūye mahātmanaḥ

bāndhavāḥ paricaryāyāṁ tasyāsan prema-bandhanāḥ

TRANSLATION

Śrī Bādarāyaṇi said: At the Rājasūya sacrifice of your saintly grandfather, his family members, bound by their love for him, engaged themselves in humble services on his behalf.

COMMENTARY

The word *prema-bandhanāḥ* (bound by love) implies that Yudhiṣṭhira's relatives engaged in different tasks at the sacrifice out of their own free will. The king did not have to force them to accept different duties.

|| 10.75.4-7 ||

bhīmo mahānasādhyakṣo dhanādhyakṣaḥ suyodhanaḥ

sahadevas tu pūjāyāṁ nakulo dravya-sādhane

guru-śuśrūṣaṇe jiṣṇuḥ kṛṣṇaḥ pādāvanejane

pariveṣaṇe drūpada-jā karṇo dāne mahā-manāḥ

yuyudhāno vikarṇaś ca hārdikyo vidurādayaḥ

bāhlīka-putrā bhūry-ādyā ye ca santardanādayaḥ

nirūpitā mahā-yajñe nānā-karmasu te tadā

pravartante sma rājendra rājñaḥ priya-cikīrṣavaḥ

TRANSLATION

Bhīma supervised the kitchen, Duryodhana looked after the treasury, while Sahadeva respectfully greeted the arriving guests. Nakula procured needed items, Arjuna attended the respectable elders, and Kṛṣṇa washed everyone's feet, while Draupadī served food, and generous Karṇa gave out the gifts. Many others, such as Yuyudhāna; Vikarṇa, Hārdikya; Vidura; Bhūriśravā and other sons of Bāhlīka; and Santardana, similarly volunteered for various duties during the elaborate sacrifice. They did so because of their eagerness to please Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, O best of kings.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa engaged Himself in washing feet because those who had pride could not do so.

|| 10.75.8 ||

ṛtvik-sadasya-bahu-vitsu suhṛttameṣu

sv-iṣṭeṣu sūnṛta-samarhaṇa-dakṣiṇābhiḥ

caidye ca sātvata-pateś caraṇaṁ praviṣṭe

cakrus tatas tv avabhṛtha-snapanaṁ dyu-nadyām

TRANSLATION

After the priests, the prominent delegates, the greatly learned saints and the King's most intimate well-wishers had all been properly honored with pleasing words, auspicious offerings and various gifts as remuneration, and after the King of Cedi had entered the lotus feet of the Lord of the Sātvatas, the avabhṛtha bath was performed in the divine river Yamunā.

|| 10.75.9 ||

mṛdaṅga-śaṅkha-paṇava-dhundhury-ānaka-gomukhāḥ

vāditrāṇi vicitrāṇi nedur āvabhṛthotsave

TRANSLATION

During the avabhṛtha celebration, the music of many kinds of instruments resounded, including mṛdaṅgas, conchshells, panavas, dhundhuris, kettledrums and gomukha horns.

|| 10.75.10 ||

nārtakyo nanṛtur hṛṣṭā gāyakā yūthaśo jaguḥ

vīṇā-veṇu-talonnādas teṣāṁ sa divam aspṛśat

TRANSLATION

Female dancers danced with great joy, and choruses sang, while the loud vibrations of vīnās, flutes and hand cymbals reached all the way to the heavenly regions.

|| 10.75.11 ||

citra-dhvaja-patākāgrair ibhendra-syandanārvabhiḥ

sv-alaṅkṛtair bhaṭair bhūpā niryayū rukma-mālinaḥ

TRANSLATION

All the kings, wearing gold necklaces, then set off for the Yamunā. They had flags and banners of various colors and were accompanied by infantrymen and well-adorned soldiers riding lordly elephants, chariots and horses.

COMMENTARY

The kings went out with four parts of the army: elephants, horses, chariots and foot soldiers proceeded by flagbearers carrying colorful banners on poles.

|| 10.75.12 ||

yadu-sṛñjaya-kāmboja-kuru-kekaya-kośalāḥ

kampayanto bhuvaṁ sainyair yayamāna-puraḥ-sarāḥ

TRANSLATION

The massed armies of the Yadus, Sṛñjayas, Kāmbojas, Kurus, Kekayas and Kośalas made the earth tremble as they followed Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja, the performer of the sacrifice, in procession.

|| 10.75.13 ||

sadasyartvig-dvija-śreṣṭhā brahma-ghoṣeṇa bhūyasā

devarṣi-pitṛ-gandharvās tuṣṭuvuḥ puṣpa-varṣiṇaḥ

TRANSLATION

The assembly officials, the priests and other excellent brāhmaṇas resoundingly vibrated Vedic mantras, while the demigods, divine sages, Pitās and Gandharvas sang praises and rained down flowers.

|| 10.75.14 ||

sv-alaṅkṛtā narā nāryo gandha-srag-bhūṣaṇāmbaraiḥ

vilimpantyo ’bhisiñcantyo vijahrur vividhai rasaiḥ

TRANSLATION

Men and women, all adorned with sandalwood paste, flower garlands, jewelry and fine clothing, sported by smearing and sprinkling one another with various liquids.

|| 10.75.15 ||

taila-gorasa-gandhoda-haridrā-sāndra-kuṅkumaiḥ

pumbhir liptāḥ pralimpantyo vijahrur vāra-yoṣitaḥ

TRANSLATION

The men smeared the courtesans with plentiful oil, yogurt, perfumed water, turmeric and kuṅkuma powder, and the courtesans playfully smeared the men with the same substances.

|| 10.75.16 ||

guptā nṛbhir niragamann upalabdhum etad

devyo yathā divi vimāna-varair nṛ-devyo

tā mātuleya-sakhibhiḥ pariṣicyamānāḥ

sa-vrīḍa-hāsa-vikasad-vadanā virejuḥ

TRANSLATION

Surrounded by guards, King Yudhiṣṭhira’s queens came out on their chariots to see the fun, just as the demigods’ wives appeared in the sky in celestial airplanes. As maternal cousins and intimate friends sprinkled the queens with liquids, the ladies’ faces bloomed with shy smiles, enhancing the queens’ splendid beauty.

COMMENTARY

The wives (*nṛ devya*) of Yudhiṣṭhira such as Draupadī went out of the city on chariots to take part in the fun, just as the wives of the demigods enjoy riding in their celestial airplanes. *Mātuleya*, maternal cousins, refers to the cousins on the husband's side (though commonly it refers to those on the wife's side) such as the sons of Vasudeva, the brother of Kuntī. The wives actually joked and played with their husbands, as will be seen in the next verse, because that would be proper. It would be improper for them to joke with even Kṛṣṇa, the most famous of the cousins. Therefore the wives joked with the friends of their cousins, meaning Bhīma, Arjuna and others who were their husbands. Thus *mātuleya* refers to Kṛṣṇa, Gada and Sārana, and *sakhibhiḥ* (friends) refers to Bhīma and Arjuna.

|| 10.75.17 ||

tā devarān uta sakhīn siṣicur dṛtībhiḥ

klinnāmbarā vivṛta-gātra-kucoru-madhyāḥ

autsukya-mukta-kavarāc cyavamāna-mālyāḥ

kṣobhaṁ dadhur mala-dhiyāṁ rucirair vihāraiḥ

TRANSLATION

As the queens squirted water from syringes at their brothers-in-law and other male companions, their own garments became drenched, revealing their arms, breasts, thighs and waists. In their excitement, the flowers fell from their loosened braids. By these charming pastimes they agitated those with contaminated consciousness.

COMMENTARY

They sprinkled water on their brothers-in-law using leather bags (*dṛtībhiḥ*) filled with water. These actions generated lusty thoughts in persons with impure minds (*mala-dhiyāṁ*) like Duryodhana, but not in pure persons.

|| 10.75.18 ||

sa samrāḍ ratham āruḍhaḥ sad-aśvaṁ rukma-mālinam

vyarocata sva-patnībhiḥ kriyābhiḥ kratu-rāḍ iva

TRANSLATION

The emperor, mounted upon his chariot drawn by excellent horses wearing golden collars, appeared splendid in the company of his wives, just like the brilliant Rājasūya sacrifice surrounded by its various rituals.

COMMENTARY

This verse describes events after they had finished their water sports. Otherwise it can refer to events before the water sports. Just as the king of sacrifices, Rājasūya, looks resplendent with its component activities and rituals, so Yudhiṣṭhira looked resplendent with his queens.

|| 10.75.19 ||

patnī-samyājāvabhṛthyaiś caritvā te tam ṛtvijaḥ

ācāntaṁ snāpayāṁ cakrur gaṅgāyāṁ saha kṛṣṇayā

TRANSLATION

The priests led the King through the execution of the final rituals of patnī-saṁyāja and avabhṛthya. Then they had him and Queen Draupadī sip water for purification and bathe in the Ganges.

COMMENTARY

The priests performed the *patnī-saṁyāja* (a ritual done by the sponsor of a sacrifice and his wife), which consists of oblations to Agni, Soma, Tvaṣṭā, and the wives of certain demigods. They also arranged the *avabhṛthya bath* (the ritual which solemnizes the completion of the sacrifice) for Yudhiṣṭhira and his wives.

|| 10.75.20 ||

deva-dundubhayo nedur nara-dundubhibhiḥ samam

mumucuḥ puṣpa-varṣāṇi devarṣi-pitṛ-mānavāḥ

TRANSLATION

The kettledrums of the gods resounded, along with those of human beings. Demigods, sages, forefathers and humans all poured down showers of flowers.

|| 10.75.21 ||

sasnus tatra tataḥ sarve varṇāśrama-yutā narāḥ

mahā-pātaky api yataḥ sadyo mucyeta kilbiṣāt

TRANSLATION

All the citizens belonging to the various orders of varṇa and āśrama then bathed in that place, where even the most grievous sinner can immediately be freed from all sinful reactions.

|| 10.75.22 ||

atha rājāhate kṣaume paridhāya sv-alaṅkṛtaḥ

ṛtvik-sadasya-viprādīn ānarcābharaṇāmbaraiḥ

TRANSLATION

Next the King put on new silken garments and adorned himself with fine jewelry. He then honored the priests, assembly officials, learned brāhmaṇas and other guests by presenting them with ornaments and clothing.

|| 10.75.23 ||

bandhūñ jñātīn nṛpān mitra-suhṛdo 'nyāṁś ca sarvaśaḥ

abhīkṣnaṁ pūjayām āsa nārāyaṇa-paro nṛpaḥ

TRANSLATION

In various ways King Yudhiṣṭhira, who had totally dedicated his life to Lord Nārāyaṇa, continuously honored his relatives, his immediate family, the other kings, his friends and well-wishers, and all others present as well.

|| 10.75.24 ||

sarve janāḥ sura-ruco maṇi-kuṇḍala-srag-

uṣṇīṣa-kañcuka-dukūla-mahārghya-hārāḥ

nāryaś ca kuṇḍala-yugālaka-vṛnda-juṣṭa-

vaktra-śriyaḥ kanaka-mekhalayā virejuḥ

TRANSLATION

All the men there shone like demigods. They were adorned with jeweled earrings, flower garlands, turbans, waistcoats, silk dhotīs and valuable pearl necklaces. The lovely faces of the women were beautified by their matched earrings and locks of hair, and they all wore golden belts.

|| 10.75.25-26 ||

athartvijo mahā-śīlāḥ sadasyā brahma-vādinaḥ

brahma-kṣatriya-viṭ-śudrā-rājāno ye samāgatāḥ

devarṣi-pitṛ-bhūtāni loka-pālāḥ sahānugāḥ

pūjitās tam anujñāpya sva-dhāmāni yayur nṛpa

TRANSLATION

Then the highly cultured priests, the great Vedic authorities who had served as sacrificial witnesses, the specially invited kings, the brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas, śūdras, demigods, sages, forefathers and mystic spirits, and the chief planetary rulers and their followers—all of them, having been worshiped by King Yudhiṣṭhira, took his permission and departed, O King, each for his own abode.

COMMENTARY

Yudhiṣṭhira worshiped the priests of exalted character (*mahā-sīlāḥ*) and others.

|| 10.75.27 ||

hari-dāsasya rājarṣe rājasūya-mahodayam

naivātṛpyan praśaṁsantaḥ piban martyo ’mṛtaṁ yathā

TRANSLATION

As they all glorified the wonderful Rājasūya-yajña performed by that great saintly King and servant of Lord Hari, they were not satiated, just as an ordinary man is never satiated when drinking nectar.

|| 10.75.28 ||

tato yudhiṣṭhiro rājā suhṛt-sambandhi-bāndhavān

premṇā nivārayām āsa kṛṣṇaṁ ca tyāga-kātaraḥ

TRANSLATION

At that time Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira stopped a number of his friends, immediate family members and other relatives from departing, among them Lord Kṛṣṇa. Out of love Yudhiṣṭhira could not let them go, for he felt the pain of imminent separation.

|| 10.75.29 ||

bhagavān api tatrāṅga nyāvātsīt tat-priyaṁ-karaḥ

prasthāpya yadu-vīrāṁś ca sāmbādīṁś ca kuśasthalīm

TRANSLATION

My dear Parīkṣit, the Supreme Lord remained there for some time to please the King, after first sending Sāmba and the other Yadu heroes back to Dvārakā.

|| 10.75.30 ||

itthaṁ rājā dharma-suto manoratha-mahārṇavam

su-dustaraṁ samuttīrya kṛṣṇenāsīd gata-jvaraḥ

TRANSLATION

Thus King Yudhiṣṭhira, the son of Dharma, was at last relieved of his burning ambition, having by the grace of Lord Kṛṣṇa successfully crossed the vast and formidable ocean of his desires.

|| 10.75.31 ||

ekadāntaḥ-pure tasya vīkṣya duryodhanaḥ śriyam

atapyad rājasūyasya mahitvaṁ cācyutātmanaḥ

TRANSLATION

One day Duryodhana, while observing the riches of King Yudhiṣṭhira's palace, felt greatly disturbed by the magnificence of both the Rājasūya sacrifice and its performer, the King, whose life and soul was Lord Acyuta.

COMMENTARY

This verse describes how Duryodhana's pride was broken. Duryodhana became disturbed by seeing the greatness of the Rājasūya sacrifice and the opulent palace of Yudhiṣṭhira, who was completely attached to Kṛṣṇa (*acyuta-ātmanaḥ*).

|| 10.75.32 ||

yasmiṁs narendra-ditijendra-surendra-lakṣmīr

nānā vibhānti kila viśva-sṛjopakḷptāḥ

tābhiḥ patīn drūpada-rāja-sutopatasthe

yasyāṁ viṣakta-hṛdayaḥ kuru-rāḍ atapyat

TRANSLATION

In that palace all the collected opulences of the kings of men, demons and gods were brilliantly manifest, having been brought there by the cosmic inventor, Maya Dānava. With those riches Draupadī served her husbands, and Duryodhana, the prince of the Kurus, lamented because he was very much attracted to her.

COMMENTARY

In the chambers were various types of treasures that Maya Dānava had collected from the kings of humans, demons and demigods. Draupadī served her husbands with those opulences in that place. Seeing those opulences Duryodhana became overcome with envy (*viṣakta-hṛdayaḥ:mātsaryāviśṭa-cittaḥ*) and his heart burned (*atapyat*).

|| 10.75.33 ||

yasmin tadā madhu-pater mahiṣī-sahasraṁ

śroṇī-bhareṇa śanakaiḥ kvaṇad-aṅghri-śobham

madhye su-cāru kuca-kuṅkuma-śoṇa-hāraṁ

śrīman-mukhaṁ pracala-kuṇḍala-kuntalāḍhyam

TRANSLATION

Lord Madhupati's thousands of queens were also staying in the palace. Their feet moved slowly, weighed down by their hips, and the bells on their feet tinkled charmingly. Their waists were very slender, the kuṅkuma from their breasts reddened their pearl necklaces, and their swaying earrings and flowing locks of hair enhanced the exquisite beauty of their faces.

COMMENTARY

That place was resplendent with thousands of Kṛṣṇa's queens having lovely faces, earrings and locks of hair. In other words, "they appeared beautiful."

|| 10.75.34-35 ||

sabhāyāṁ maya-kŸptāyāṁ kvāpi dharma-suto 'dhirāṭ

vṛto 'nugair bandhubhiś ca kṛṣṇenāpi sva-cakṣuṣā

āsīnaḥ kāñcane sākṣād āsane maghavān iva

pārameṣṭhya-śrīyā juṣṭaḥ stūyamānaś ca vandibhiḥ

TRANSLATION

It so happened that Emperor Yudhiṣṭhira, the son of Dharma, was sitting just like Indra on a golden throne in the assembly hall built by Maya Dānava. Present with him were his attendants and family members, and also Lord Kṛṣṇa, his special eye. Displaying the opulences of Brahmā himself, King Yudhiṣṭhira was being praised by the court poets.

COMMENTARY

Yudhiṣṭhira was surrounded by friends, attendants and Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who acted as his eyes (*sva-cakṣuṣā*) since Kṛṣṇa advised the king on what was beneficial and what was not.

|| 10.75.36 ||

tatra duryodhano mānī parīto bhrātṛbhir nṛpa

kirīṭa-mālī nyaviśad asi-hastaḥ kṣipan ruṣā

TRANSLATION

Proud Duryodhana, holding a sword in his hand and wearing a crown and necklace, angrily went into the palace in the company of his brothers, O King, insulting the doorkeepers as he entered.

COMMENTARY

Kṣipan “insulting” means abusing the door keepers with sharp words.

|| 10.75.37 ||

sthale ’bhyagṛhṇād vastrāntaṁ jalaṁ matvā sthale ’patat

jale ca sthala-vad bhrāntyā maya-māyā-vimohitaḥ

TRANSLATION

Bewildered by the illusions created through Maya Dānava’s magic, Duryodhana mistook the solid floor for water and lifted the end of his garment. And elsewhere he fell into the water, mistaking it for the solid floor.

COMMENTARY

Duryodhana mistook the solid ground for water, so he lifted his lower cloth to keep it from getting wet. Then thinking that the water was solid ground, he fell into the water. He was bewildered by Maya Dānava's mystic power, which revealed who was hostile in the assembly hall.

|| 10.75.38 ||

jahāsa bhīmas taṁ dṛṣṭvā striyo nṛpatayo pare

nivāryamāṇā apy aṅga rājñā kṛṣṇānumoditāḥ

TRANSLATION

My dear Parīkṣit, Bhīma laughed to see this, and so did the women, kings and others. King Yudhiṣṭhira tried to stop them, but Lord Kṛṣṇa showed His approval.

COMMENTARY

King Yudhiṣṭhira tried to check the laughter of the women, and so did Bhīma who gestured with his eyes saying, "Don't laugh." Kṛṣṇa, however, encouraged them with the movement of His eyebrows. What could be done? By this Kṛṣṇa sowed the seed of dissension within Duryodhana in order to remove the burden of wicked kings from the earth.

|| 10.75.39 ||

sa vrīḍito 'vag-vadano ruṣā jvalan niṣkramya tūṣṇīṁ prayayau gajāhvayam

hā-heti śabdaḥ su-mahān abhūt satām ajāta-śatrur vimanā ivābhavat

babhūva tūṣṇīṁ bhagavān bhuvo bharaṁ samujjihīrṣur bhramati sma yad-dṛśā

TRANSLATION

Humiliated and burning with anger, Duryodhana turned his face down, left without uttering a word and went back to Hastināpura. The saintly persons present loudly cried out, "Alas, alas !" and King Yudhiṣṭhira was somewhat saddened. But the Supreme Lord, whose mere glance had bewildered Duryodhana, remained silent, for His intention was to remove the burden of the earth.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa bewildered Duryodhana simply by His glance, and He engaged the magic power of Maya Dānava as a secondary cause.

|| 10.75.40 ||

etat te ’bhihitaṁ rājan yat pṛṣṭo ’ham iha tvayā

suyodhanasya daurātmyaṁ rājasūye mahā-kratau

TRANSLATION

I have now replied to your question, O King, concerning why Duryodhana was dissatisfied on the occasion of the great Rājasūya sacrifice.

Thus ends the commentary on the Seventy-fifth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

The Battle Between Śālva and the Vṛṣṇis

|| 10.76.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

athānyad api kṛṣṇasya śṛṇu karmādbhutaṁ nṛpa

krīḍā-nara-śarīrasya yathā saubha-patir hataḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Now please hear, O King, another wondrous deed performed by Lord Kṛṣṇa, who appeared in His humanlike body to enjoy transcendental pastimes. Hear how He killed the master of Saubha.

COMMENTARY

In this chapter, Śālva obtains a boon from Śiva and enters battle with the Yadus. Dyumān strikes Pradyumna so that he must leave the battlefield.

"O king! Just hear the exploits of Kṛṣṇa, who takes a human form and engages mainly in playing (*kridā pradhānaḥ*)." The compound *krīḍā-nara-sarīrasya* is analyzed in the same way as such compounds as *sāka-pārthiva*, which means "a king who enjoys vegetables."

|| 10.76.2 ||

śiśupāla-sakhaḥ śālvo rukmiṇy-udvāha āgataḥ

yadubhir nirjitaḥ saṅkhye jarāsandhādayas tathā

TRANSLATION

Śālva was a friend of Śiśupāla's. When he attended the wedding of Rukmiṇī, the Yadu warriors defeated him in battle, along with Jarāsandha and the other kings.

|| 10.76.3 ||

śālvaḥ pratijñām akaroc chṛṇvatāṁ sarva-bhūbhujām

ayādavāṁ kṣmāṁ kariṣye pauruṣaṁ mama paśyata

TRANSLATION

Śālva swore in the presence of all the kings: "I will rid the earth of Yādavas. Just see my prowess!"

|| 10.76.4 ||

iti mūḍhaḥ pratijñāya devaṁ paśu-patiṁ prabhum

ārādhayām āsa nṛpaḥ pāṁśu-muṣṭiṁ sakṛd grasan

TRANSLATION

Having thus made his vow, the foolish King proceeded to worship Lord Paśupati [Śiva] as his deity by eating a handful of dust each day, and nothing more.

|| 10.76.5 ||

saṁvatsarānte bhagavān āśu-toṣa umā-patiḥ

vareṇa cchandayām āsa śālvaṁ śaraṇam āgatam

TRANSLATION

The great Lord Umāpati is known as "he who is quickly pleased," yet only at the end of a year did he gratify Śālva, who had approached him for shelter, by offering him a choice of benedictions.

COMMENTARY

After a year, Śiva offered Śālva the boon that he intended (*cchan-dayām āsa*) to give, and thus brought the demon under control. The *Amara-kośa* dictionary gives the definition *abhiprāya-vaśau chandau*, "The verb *chand* can indicate intention or subordination."

|| 10.76.6 ||

devāsura-manuṣyāṇāṁ gandharvoraga-rakṣasām

abhedyaṁ kāma-gaṁ vavre sa yānaṁ vṛṣṇi-bhīṣaṇam

TRANSLATION

Śālva chose a vehicle that could be destroyed by neither demigods, demons, humans, Gandharvas, Uragas nor Rākṣasas, that could travel anywhere he wished to go, and that would terrify the Vṛṣṇis.

|| 10.76.7 ||

tatheti giriśādiṣṭo mayaḥ para-puraṁ-jayaḥ

puraṁ nirmāya śālvāya prādāt saubham ayas-mayam

TRANSLATION

Lord Śiva said, "So be it." On his order, Maya Dānava, who conquers his enemies' cities, constructed a flying iron city named Saubha and presented it to Śālva.

COMMENTARY

Maya Dānava gave Śālva a flying city made out of iron (*ayas-mayam*) called Saubha.

|| 10.76.8 ||

sa labdhvā kāma-gaṁ yānaṁ tamo-dhāma durāsadam

yayas dvāravatīṁ śālvo vairaṁ vṛṣṇi-kṛtaṁ smaran

TRANSLATION

This unassailable vehicle was filled with darkness and could go anywhere. Upon obtaining it, Śālva went to Dvārakā, remembering the Vṛṣṇis' enmity toward him.

|| 10.76.9-11 ||

nirudhya senayā śālvo mahatyā bharatarṣabha

purīṁ babhañjopavanān udyānāni ca sarvaśaḥ

sa-gopurāṇi dvārāṇi prāsādāṭṭāla-tolikāḥ

vihārān sa vimānāgryān nipetuḥ śastra-vṛṣṭayaḥ

śilā-drumāś cāśanayaḥ sarpā āsāra-śarkarāḥ

pracaṇḍaś cakravāto 'bhūd rajasācchāditā diśaḥ

TRANSLATION

Śālva besieged the city with a large army, O best of the Bharatas, decimating the outlying parks and gardens, the mansions along with their observatories, towering gateways and surrounding walls, and also the public recreational areas. From his excellent airship he threw down a torrent of weapons, including stones, tree trunks, thunderbolts, snakes and hailstones. A fierce whirlwind arose and blanketed all directions with dust.

COMMENTARY

Śālva's ground troops destroyed the walls (*tolikā*) and recreational parks (*vihārān*), while Śālva bombarded the city with various weapons from his excellent Saubha aircraft.

|| 10.76.12 ||

ity ardyamānā saubhena kṛṣṇasya nagarī bhṛśam

nābhyapadyata śaṁ rājaṁs tri-pureṇa yathā mahī

TRANSLATION

Thus terribly tormented by the airship Saubha, Lord Kṛṣṇa's city had no peace, O King, just like the earth when it was attacked by the three aerial cities of the demons.

|| 10.76.13 ||

pradyumno bhagavān vīkṣya bādhyamānā nijāḥ prajāḥ

ma bhaiṣṭety abhyadhād vīro rathārūḍho mahā-yaśāḥ

TRANSLATION

Seeing His subjects so harassed, the glorious and heroic Lord Pradyumna told them, “Do not fear,” and mounted His chariot.

COMMENTARY

Though Balarāma wanted to go out and fight, Pradyumna said, “We will kill Śālva. You should remain inside comfortably.” Saying this, he went out with Sāmba and others.

|| 10.76.14-15 ||

sātyakiś cārudeṣṇaś ca sāmbo ’krūraḥ sahānujaḥ

hārdikyo bhānuvindaś ca gadaś ca śuka-sāraṇau

apare ca maheṣv-āsā ratha-yūthapa-yūthapāḥ

niryayur daṁśitā guptā rathebhāśva-padātibhiḥ

TRANSLATION

The chief commanders of the chariot warriors—Sātyaki, Cārudeṣṇa, Sāmba, Akrūra and his younger brothers, along with Hārdikya, Bhānuvinda, Gada, Śuka and Sāraṇa—went out of the city with many other eminent bowmen, all girded in armor and protected by contingents of soldiers riding on chariots, elephants and horses, and also by companies of infantry.

|| 10.76.16 ||

tataḥ pravavṛte yuddhaṁ śālvānāṁ yadubhiḥ saha

yathāsurāṇāṁ vibudhais tumulaṁ loma-harṣaṇam

TRANSLATION

A tumultuous, hair-raising battle then commenced between Śālva’s forces and the Yadus. It equaled the great battles between the demons and demigods.

|| 10.76.17 ||

tāś ca saubha-pater māyā divyāstrai rukmiṇī-sutaḥ

kṣaṇena nāśayām āsa naiśaṁ tama ivoṣṇa-guḥ

TRANSLATION

With His divine weapons Pradyumna instantly destroyed all of Śālva's magic illusions, in the same way that the warm rays of the sun dissipate the darkness of night.

COMMENTARY

Just as the sun (*uṣṇa-guḥ*) destroys darkness (*naiśam*), so Pradyumna destroyed the magical illusions of Śālva.

|| 10.76.18-19 ||

vivyādha pañca-viṁśatyā svarṇa-puṅkhair ayo-mukhaiḥ

śālvasya dhvajinī-pālaṁ śaraiḥ sannata-parvabhiḥ

śatenātāḍayac chālvam ekaikenāsya sainikān

daśabhir daśabhir netṝn vāhanāni tribhis tribhiḥ

TRANSLATION

Lord Pradyumna's arrows all had gold shafts, iron heads and perfectly smooth joints. With twenty-five of them He struck down Śālva's commander-in-chief [Dyumān], and with one hundred He struck Śālva himself. Then He pierced Śālva's officers with one arrow each, his chariot drivers with ten arrows each, and his horses and other carriers with three arrows each.

COMMENTARY

Pradyumna pierced Dyumān, the commander-in-chief (*dhvajinī-pālam*) of the army, with twenty five arrows having smooth joints. With ten arrows each he pierced the chariot drivers (*netṝn*).

|| 10.76.20 ||

tad adbhutaṁ mahat karma pradyumnasya mahātmanaḥ

dṛṣṭvā taṁ pūjayām āsuḥ sarve sva-para-sainikāḥ

TRANSLATION

When they saw the glorious Pradyumna perform that amazing and mighty feat, all the soldiers on both sides praised Him.

|| 10.76.21 ||

bahu-rūpaika-rūpaṁ tad dṛśyate na ca dṛśyate

māyā-mayaṁ maya-kṛtaṁ durvibhāvyaṁ parair abhūt

TRANSLATION

At one moment the magic airship built by Maya Dānava appeared in many identical forms, and the next moment it was again only one. Sometimes it was visible, and sometimes not. Thus Śālva's opponents could never be sure where it was.

COMMENTARY

In one form or many forms the Saubha aircraft (*tad*) was sometimes visible and sometimes not.

|| 10.76.22 ||

kvacid bhūmau kvacid vyomni giri-mūrdhni jale kvacit

alāta-cakra-vad bhrāmyat saubhaṁ tad duravasthitam

TRANSLATION

From one moment to the next the Saubha airship appeared on the earth, in the sky, on a mountain peak or in the water. Like a whirling, flaming baton, it never remained in any one place.

|| 10.76.23 ||

yatra yatropalakṣyeta sa-saubhaḥ saha-sainikaḥ

śālvas tatas tato 'muñcañ charān sātvata-yūthapāḥ

TRANSLATION

Wherever Śālva would appear with his Saubha ship and his army, there the Yadu commanders would shoot their arrows.

|| 10.76.24 ||

śarair agny-arka-saṁsparśair āśī-viṣa-durāsadaiḥ

pīḍyamāna-purānīkaḥ śālvo 'muhyat pareritaiḥ

TRANSLATION

Śālva became bewildered upon seeing his army and aerial city thus harassed by his enemy's arrows, which struck like fire and the sun and were as intolerable as snake venom.

COMMENTARY

Both the flying city of Saubha and the troops of Śālva were severely afflicted by the Yadu's arrows which burned like fire, struck simultaneously from all sides like the sun's rays, and, like snake venom, were lethal by a single touch. Thus Śālva became bewildered.

|| 10.76.25 ||

śālvānīkapa-śastraughair vṛṣṇi-vīrā bhṛśārditāḥ

na tatyajū raṇaṁ svaṁ svaṁ loka-dvaya-jigīṣavaḥ

TRANSLATION

Because the heroes of the Vṛṣṇi clan were eager for victory in this world and the next, they did not abandon their assigned posts on the battlefield, even though the downpour of weapons hurled by Śālva's commanders tormented them.

|| 10.76.26 ||

śālvāmātyo dyumān nāma pradyumnaṁ prak prapīḍitaḥ

āsādya gadayā maurvyā vyāhatya vyanadad balī

TRANSLATION

Śālva's minister Dyumān, previously wounded by Śrī Pradyumna, now ran up to Him and, roaring loudly, struck Him with his club of black steel.

COMMENTARY

Having been first struck by a hand weapon of Pradyumna, Dyumān attacked Pradyumna with a club made of carbonized iron (*maurvyā*).

|| 10.76.27 ||

pradyumnaṁ gadayā sīrṇa-vakṣaḥ-sthalam ariṁ-damam

apovāha raṇāt sūto dharma-vid dārukātmajaḥ

TRANSLATION

Pradyumna's driver, the son of Dāruka, thought that his valiant master's chest had been shattered by the club. Knowing well his religious duty, he removed Pradyumna from the battlefield.

COMMENTARY

Actually the spiritual chest of Pradyumna cannot be pierced (*sīrṇa-vakṣaḥ-sthalam*) by the material club of Dyumān. However Kṛṣṇa's *līlā-śakti* instantly arranged all of this in order to increase taste for enthusiastic fighting. Consequently, his charioteer thought that Pradyumna's chest had been shattered, so he took him off the battlefield because he knew the proper course of action (*dharma-vid*). This is stated later in verse 32, *sūtaḥ kṛcchra-gataṁ rakṣed*, "The chariot driver must protect the master of the chariot when he is in danger."

However by grammatical rule of *sandhi* the charioteer can also be described as *adharma vit* (not knowing the truth), since he didn't know that Pradyumna had an eternal, spiritual form (*sac-cid-ānanda vigraha*) that could never be wounded by mundane weapons. This ignorance on his part is quite appropriate, since he was the son of Dāruka. The *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* says *parīkṣiti bhaved rāgo dāruke ca tathoddhave*, "Parīkṣit, Dāruka and Uddhava had intense spiritual love for the Lord." Similarly, the son of Dāruka had so much affection for Pradyumna that *yogamāyā* covered his realization of the indestructible nature of the Lord's transcendental body. Fearing the safety of his master, he hastily removed Him from the battlefield.

|| 10.76.28 ||

labdha-samjño muhūrtena kārṣṇiḥ sārathim abravīt

aho asādhv idaṁ sūta yad raṇān me 'pasarpaṇam

TRANSLATION

Quickly regaining consciousness, Lord Kṛṣṇa's son Pradyumna said to His charioteer, "O driver, this is abominable—for Me to have been removed from the battlefield!"

COMMENTARY

In a moment, Pradyumna regained full consciousness (*labdha-samjño*), and realized that he had been taken from the battlefield. Or the meaning can be: Obtaining a hint (*samjño*) about what happened from the charioteer who said that He had fainted and was therefore taken away, Pradyumna angrily rebuked him.

|| 10.76.29 ||

na yadūnāṁ kule jātaḥ śrūyate raṇa-vicyutaḥ

vinā mat klība-cittena sūtena prāpta-kilbiṣāt

TRANSLATION

“Except for Me, no one born in the Yadu dynasty has ever been known to abandon the battlefield. My reputation has now been stained by a driver who thinks like a eunuch.”

COMMENTARY

Pradyumna said, “Only I have abandoned the battlefield because of this infamous act done by my feeble charioteer.”

|| 10.76.30 ||

kiṁ nu vakṣye ’bhisaṅgamya pitarau rāma-keśavau

yuddhāt samyag apakrāntaḥ pṛṣṭas tatrātmanaḥ kṣamam

TRANSLATION

“What will I say to My fathers, Rāma and Keśava, when I return to Them after having simply fled the battle? What can I tell Them that will befit My honor?”

COMMENTARY

Pradyumna said, “On meeting Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, what suitable (*ksamam*) reply can I give Them when asked about this?”

|| 10.76.31 ||

vyaktaṁ me kathayiṣyanti hasantyo bhrātṛ-jāmayaḥ

klaibyaṁ kathaṁ kathaṁ vīra tavānyaiḥ kathyatāṁ mṛdhe

TRANSLATION

“Certainly My sisters-in-law will laugh at Me and say, ‘O hero, tell us how in the world Your enemies turned You into such a coward in battle.’”

COMMENTARY

Pradyumna said, “My sisters-in-law (*bhrātṛ-jāmayaḥ*) will ask while laughing, “O warrior, please tell us how you became cowardly in fighting with others?” The word *kathaṁ* (please) is repeated twice to show their astonishment.”

|| 10.76.32 ||

sārathir uvāca

dharmaṁ vijānatāyuṣman kṛtam etan mayā vibho

sūtaḥ kṛcchra-gataṁ rakṣed rathinaṁ sārathiṁ rathī

TRANSLATION

The driver replied: O long-lived one, I have done this knowing full well my prescribed duty. O my Lord, the chariot driver must protect the master of the chariot when he is in danger, and the master must also protect his driver.

|| 10.76.33 ||

etad viditvā tu bhavān mayāpovāhito raṇāt

upasṛṣṭaḥ pareṇeti mūrcchito gadayā hataḥ

TRANSLATION

With this rule in mind, I removed You from the battlefield, since You had been struck unconscious by Your enemy’s club and I thought You were seriously injured.

COMMENTARY

The charioteer said, “I removed You from the battlefield because You fell unconscious (*mūrcchitaḥ*) from the blows of the enemy’s club. Afterwards, you said, ‘Damn you, fool! You do not understand Me properly!’”

Thus ends the commentary on the Seventy-sixth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Lord Kṛṣṇa Slays the Demon Śālva

|| 10.77.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

sa upaspṛśya salilaṁ daṁśito dhṛta-kārmukaḥ

naya māṁ dyumataḥ pārśvaṁ vīrasyety āha sārathim

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: After refreshing Himself with water, putting on His armor and picking up His bow, Lord Pradyumna told His driver, "Take Me back to where the hero Dyumān is standing."

COMMENTARY

In this chapter, Kṛṣṇa returns to Dvārakā from Indraprastha and quickly kills Śālva, who was flying in his magical vehicle. Pradyumna, who was well-versed in *kṣatriya-dharma*, sipped *ācamana* (*upaspṛśya salilaṁ*) and then put on his armor. Then he returned to the battlefield in order to correct the fault of fleeing from the battlefield incurred by his charioteer while executing his duty of protecting him.

|| 10.77.2 ||

vidhamantaṁ sva-sainyāni dyumantaṁ rukmiṇī-sutaḥ

pratihatya pratyavidhyān nārācair aṣṭabhiḥ smayan

TRANSLATION

In Pradyumna's absence, Dyumān had been devastating His army, but now Pradyumna counterattacked Dyumān and, smiling, pierced him with eight nārāca arrows.

COMMENTARY

Pradyumna challenged Dyumān, saying "Now see if you can strike Me!" After saying this and allowing Dyumān to shoot his weapons, Pradyumna counter attacked (*pratihatya*) with His own deadly arrows.

|| 10.77.3 ||

caturbhiś caturo vāhān sūtam ekena cāhanat

dvābhyaṁ dhanuś ca ketuṁ ca śareṇānyena vai śiraḥ

TRANSLATION

With four of these arrows He struck Dyumān's four horses, with one arrow, his driver, with two more arrows, his bow and chariot flag, and with the last arrow, Dyumān's head.

COMMENTARY

This verse describes how he dispensed the eight arrows.

|| 10.77.4 ||

gada-sātyaki-sāmbādyā jaghnuḥ saubha-pater balam

petuḥ samudre saubheyāḥ sarve sañchinna-kandharāḥ

TRANSLATION

Gada, Sātyaki, Sāmba and others began killing Śālva's army, and thus all the soldiers inside the airship began falling into the ocean, their necks severed.

COMMENTARY

The soldiers riding in the Saubha aircraft (*saubheyāḥ*) fell in the ocean with their heads cut off.

|| 10.77.5 ||

evaṁ yadūnāṁ śālvānāṁ nighnatām itaretaram

yuddhaṁ tri-nava-rātraṁ tad abhūt tumulam ulbaṇam

TRANSLATION

As the Yadus and Śālva's followers thus went on attacking one another, the tumultuous, fearsome battle continued for twenty-seven days and nights.

COMMENTARY

The amalgamation of nine nights is called *nava-rātraṁ*, and three such *nava-rātras* is called *tri-nava-rātraṁ*. In other words, they fought for twenty seven days and nights. *Tumulam* means "tumultuous," and *ulbaṇam* means "terrible."

|| 10.77.6-7 ||

indraprasthaṁ gataḥ kṛṣṇa āhūto dharma-sūnunā

rājasūye 'tha nivṛtte śiśupāle ca saṁsthite

kuru-vṛddhān anujñāpya munīṁś ca sa-sutāṁ pṛthām

nimittāny ati-ghorāṇi paśyan dvāravatīṁ yayau

TRANSLATION

Invited by Yudhiṣṭhira, the son of Dharma, Lord Kṛṣṇa had gone to Indraprastha. Now that the Rājasūya sacrifice had been completed and Śiśupāla killed, the Lord began to see inauspicious omens. So He took leave of the Kuru elders and the great sages, and also of Pṛthā and her sons, and returned to Dvārakā.

|| 10.77.8 ||

āha cāham ihāyāta ārya-miśrābhisaṅgataḥ

rājanyāś caidya-pakṣīyā nūnaṁ hanyuḥ purīṁ mama

TRANSLATION

The Lord said to Himself: Because I have come here with My respected elder brother, kings partial to Śiśupāla may well be attacking My capital city.

COMMENTARY

This verse expresses Kṛṣṇa's thoughts: "I have come here with Balarāma, My most respected and worshipable (*miśra:pūjyaḥ*) elder (*arya*) brother." This statement is not the opinion of Śukadeva, but rather expresses the opinions of others, as Śukadeva explains in verse thirty.

|| 10.77.9 ||

vīkṣya tat kadanaṁ svānāṁ nirūpya pura-rakṣaṇam

saubhaṁ ca śālva-rājaṁ ca dārukaṁ prāha keśavaḥ

TRANSLATION

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] After He arrived at Dvārakā and saw how His people were threatened with destruction, and also saw Śālva and his Saubha airship, Lord Keśava arranged for the city's defense and then addressed Dāruka as follows.

COMMENTARY

Thinking thus, Kṛṣṇa arrived at Dvārakā. Kṛṣṇa saw the Śālva aircraft and the decimation of His own forces. Then Kṛṣṇa appointed a special guard for Rukmiṇī and the other queens inside the palaces. Selected generals used a secret route to convey the queens to safety in the inner chambers of the city.

|| 10.77.10 ||

rathaṁ prāpaya me sūta śālvasyāntikam āśu vai

sambhramas te na kartavyo māyāvī saubha-rāḍ ayam

TRANSLATION

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] O driver, quickly take My chariot near Śālva. This lord of Saubha is a powerful magician; don't let him bewilder you.

|| 10.77.11 ||

ity uktaś codayām āsa ratham āsthāya dārukaḥ

viśantaṁ dadṛśuḥ sarve sve pare cāruṇānujam

TRANSLATION

Thus ordered, Dāruka took command of the Lord's chariot and drove forth. As the chariot entered the battlefield, everyone there, both friend and foe, caught sight of the emblem of Garuḍa.

COMMENTARY

Dāruka took full control (*āsthāya*) of Kṛṣṇa's chariot, which had the emblem of Garuḍa, the younger brother of Aruṇa (*aruṇa-anujam*), on its flag.

|| 10.77.12 ||

śālvaś ca kṛṣṇam ālokya hata-prāya-baleśvaraḥ

prāharat kṛṣṇa-sūtaya śaktiṁ bhīma-ravāṁ mṛdhe

TRANSLATION

When Śālva, the master of a decimated army, saw Lord Kṛṣṇa approaching, he hurled his spear at the Lord's charioteer. The spear roared frighteningly as it flew across the battlefield.

COMMENTARY

Śālva was the lord of an army which was almost completely devastated.

|| 10.77.13 ||

tām āpatantīṁ nabhasi maholkām iva raṁhasā

bhāsayantīṁ diśaḥ śauriḥ sāyakaiḥ śatadhācchinat

TRANSLATION

Śālva's hurtling spear lit up the whole sky like a mighty meteor, but Lord Śauri tore the great weapon into hundreds of pieces with His arrows.

|| 10.77.14 ||

taṁ ca ṣoḍaśabhir viddhvā bānaiḥ saubhaṁ ca khe bhramat

avidhyac chara-sandohaiḥ khaṁ sūrya iva raśmibhiḥ

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa then pierced Śālva with sixteen arrows and struck the Saubha airship with a deluge of arrows as it darted about the sky. Firing His arrows, the Lord appeared like the sun flooding the heavens with its rays.

COMMENTARY

With its dark blue color and rapid movements the Saubha aircraft appeared like the sky (*khaṁ*). Kṛṣṇa's arrows are compared to the sun's rays in terms of their being countless and creating unbearably scorching heat. Kṛṣṇa Himself is compared to the sun, in terms of His being all-potent and victorious over opponents.

|| 10.77.15 ||

śālvaḥ śaures tu doḥ savyaṁ sa-śārṅgaṁ śārṅga-dhanvanaḥ

bibheda nyapatad dhastāc chārṅgam āsīt tad adbhutam

TRANSLATION

Śālva then managed to strike Lord Kṛṣṇa's left arm, which held His bow Śārṅga, and, amazingly, Śārṅga fell from His hand.

COMMENTARY

Verse 15 and 16 are not the opinion of Śukadeva Gosvāmī. The apparent fault of using the phrase *doḥ savyaṁ* "left arm" in the neuter gender is also seen in the poetry of Raghu. It was astonishing that Kṛṣṇa's bow fell from His hands, since Kṛṣṇa's arm has unlimited strength.

|| 10.77.16 ||

hāhā-kāro mahān āsīd bhūtānāṁ tatra paśyatām

ninadya saubha-rāḍ uccair idam āha janārdanam

TRANSLATION

Those who witnessed this all cried out in dismay. Then the master of Saubha roared loudly and addressed Lord Janārdana.

|| 10.77.17-18 ||

yat tvayā mūḍha naḥ sakhyur bhrātur bhāryā hṛtekṣatām

pramattaḥ sa sabhā-madhye tvayā vyāpāditaḥ sakhā

taṁ tvādya niśitair bāṇair aparājita-māninam

nayāmy apunar-āvṛttiṁ yadi tiṣṭher mamāgrataḥ

TRANSLATION

[Śālva said:] You fool! Because in our presence You kidnapped the bride of our friend Śiśupāla, Your own cousin, and because You later murdered him in the sacred assembly while he was inattentive, today with my sharp arrows I will send You to the land of no return! Though You think Yourself invincible, I will kill You now if You dare stand before me.

COMMENTARY

Śālva said, "O fool! I will send You to death (*apunar-āvṛttim: mṛtyum*)." According to the inspiration of Bhāratī, the goddess of learning, the idea is: "Because there is no confusion (*yat tvayā mūḍha*) for You, You took Lakṣmī, who is actually Your rightful wife, while we and our friend Śiśupāla, Your paternal cousin, were completely ignored by You." Here the genitive case implies disregard. "With my sharp arrows I will make You lead me to liberation (*tvam apunar-āvṛttim:mṛtyum*). Or "I will attain You, who gives liberation (*tvam apunar-āvṛttim:mṛtyum*), and never be born again."

|| 10.77.19 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

vṛthā tvaṁ katthase manda na paśyasy antike 'ntakam

paurusaṁ darśayanti sma śūrā na bahu-bhāṣiṇaḥ

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord said: O dullard, you boast in vain, since you fail to see death standing near you. Real heroes do not talk much but rather show their prowess in action.

|| 10.77.20 ||

ity uktvā bhagavāñ chālvaṁ gadayā bhīma-vegayā

tatāḍa jatrau saṁrabdhaḥ sa cakampe vamann asṛk

TRANSLATION

Having said this, the furious Lord swung His club with frightening power and speed and hit Śālva on the collarbone, making him tremble and vomit blood.

|| 10.77.21 ||

gadāyāṁ sannivṛttāyāṁ śālvas tv antaradhīyata

tato muhūrta āgatya puruṣaḥ śirasācyutam

devakyā prahito 'smīti natvā prāha vaco rudan

TRANSLATION

But as soon as Lord Acyuta withdrew His club, Śālva disappeared from sight, and a moment later a man approached the Lord. Bowing his head down to Him, he announced, "Devakī has sent me," and, sobbing, spoke the following words.

COMMENTARY

The opinion of others is expressed from here to verse twenty nine.

|| 10.77.22 ||

kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa mahā-bāho pitā te pitṛ-vatsala

baddhvāpanītaḥ śālvena saunikena yathā paśuḥ

TRANSLATION

[The man said:] O Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, mighty-armed one, who are so affectionate to Your parents! Śālva has seized Your father and taken him away, as a butcher leads an animal to slaughter.

|| 10.77.23 ||

niśamya vipriyaṁ kṛṣṇo mānusīṁ prakṛtiṁ gataḥ

vimanasko ghṛṇī snehād babhāṣe prākṛto yathā

TRANSLATION

When He heard this disturbing news, Lord Kṛṣṇa, who was playing the role of a mortal man, showed sorrow and compassion, and out of love for His parents He spoke the following words like an ordinary conditioned soul.

COMMENTARY

Ghṛṇī means compassionate.

|| 10.77.24 ||

kathaṁ rāmam asambhrāntaṁ jitvājeyaṁ surāsuraiḥ

śālvenālpīyasā nītaḥ pitā me balavān vidhiḥ

TRANSLATION

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] Balarāma is ever vigilant, and no demigod or demon can defeat Him. So how could this insignificant Śālva defeat Him and abduct My father? Indeed, fate is all-powerful!

|| 10.77.25 ||

iti bruvāṇe govinde saubha-rāṭ pratyupasthitaḥ

vasudevam ivānīya kṛṣṇaṁ cedam uvāca saḥ

TRANSLATION

After Govinda spoke these words, the master of Saubha again appeared, apparently leading Vasudeva before the Lord. Śālva then spoke as follows.

|| 10.77.26 ||

eṣa te janitā tāto yad-artham iha jīvasi

vadhiṣye vīkṣatas te 'mum īśaś cet pāhi bāliśa

TRANSLATION

[Śālva said:] Here is Your dear father, who begot You and for whose sake You are living in this world. I shall now kill him before Your very eyes. Save him if You can, weakling!

COMMENTARY

Śālva said, "Right before Your eyes I will kill Your father who gave You birth (*janitā*)."

|| 10.77.27 ||

evaṁ nirbhartsya māyāvī khaḍgenānakadundubheḥ

utkṛtya śira ādāya kha-sthaṁ saubhaṁ samāviśat

TRANSLATION

After he had mocked the Lord in this way, the magician Śālva appeared to cut off Vasudeva's head with his sword. Taking the head with him, he entered the Saubha vehicle, which was hovering in the sky.

|| 10.77.28 ||

tato muhūrtaṁ prakṛtāv upaplutaḥ sva-bodha āste sva-janānuṣaṅgataḥ

mahānubhāvas tad abudhyad āsurīṁ māyāṁ sa śālva-prasṛtāṁ mayoditām

TRANSLATION

By nature Lord Kṛṣṇa is full in knowledge, and He possesses unlimited powers of perception. Yet for a moment, out of great affection for His loved ones, He remained absorbed in the mood of an ordinary human being. He soon recalled, however, that this was all a demoniac illusion engineered by Maya Dānava and employed by Śālva.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa remained overcome (*upaplutaḥ*) with the sentiments of an ordinary human (*prakṛtāu*). However, due to His immense powers of perception (*mahā-anubhāvaḥ*) Kṛṣṇa concluded that Śālva was using a demonic illusion created by Maya Dānava.

|| 10.77.29 ||

na tatra dūtaṁ na pituḥ kalevaraṁ prabuddha ājau samapaśyad acyutaḥ

svāpnaṁ yathā cāmbara-cāriṇaṁ ripuṁ saubha-stham ālokya nihantum udyataḥ

TRANSLATION

Now alert to the actual situation, Lord Acyuta saw before Him on the battlefield neither the messenger nor His father's body. It was as if He had awakened from a dream. Seeing His enemy flying above Him in his Saubha plane, the Lord then prepared to kill him.

COMMENTARY

Therefore, as if awaking from a dream, Kṛṣṇa no longer saw His father's body or the messenger.

|| 10.77.30 ||

evaṁ vadanti rājarṣe ṛṣayaḥ ke ca nānvitāḥ

yat sva-vāco virudhyeta nūnaṁ te na smaranty uta

TRANSLATION

Such is the account given by some sages, O wise King, but those who speak in this illogical way are contradicting themselves, having forgotten their own previous statements.

COMMENTARY

Having presented the story told by others (Verses 21-29), Śukadeva Gosvāmī now refutes it with this verse: "Some sages who lack proper discrimination of logical premises and conclusions have related this story. They did not consider that their words were contradictory to other statements of the *Bhāgavatam*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa did not go to participate in the Rājasūya sacrifice in the company of Balarāma, since it was previously stated: *saṅkarṣaṇam anujñāpya*, "Kṛṣṇa went to Indraprastha after taking leave of Balarāma." (SB 10.71.13)

"Thus how can the statements of Kṛṣṇa related by them be reconciled? Even if they were true, how could Kṛṣṇa say such things as *kathaṁ rāmam asambhrāntaṁ jitvājeyaṁ surāsuraiḥ*: "How could a weakling like Śālva defeat Balarāma, who is unconquerable by demigods or demons, and take away My father?" (SB 10.77.24)

|| 10.77.31 ||

kva śoka-mohau sneho vā bhayaṁ vā ye 'jña-sambhavāḥ

kva cākhaṇḍita-vijñāna- jñānaiśvaryas tv akhaṇḍitaḥ

TRANSLATION

How can lamentation, bewilderment, material affection or fear, all born out of ignorance, be ascribed to the infinite Supreme Lord, whose perception, knowledge and power are all similarly infinite?

COMMENTARY

Moreover, it is not actually possible for Kṛṣṇa to experience bewilderment on account of the illusory magic of Śālva. How then did Kṛṣṇa manifest affection and lamentation in regard to Vasudeva, which are both based on such bewilderment? If it was impossible for Kṛṣṇa to be afraid of Śālva, then how did Kṛṣṇa's Śārṅga bow fall from His hands, which was apparently caused by Salva's magic?

Śukadeva Gosvāmī answers these questions in this verse. Lamentation and other emotions are of two types: caused by ignorance and caused by knowledge. The emotions described here are possible in people who are ignorant, or do not know everything, or who are dependent on wrong sources of knowledge. But how is it possible in the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa who has unlimited knowledge? Transcendental lamentation and other such spiritual emotions are possible in those who have perfect awareness of the world beyond illusion. This applies to the devotees and the Lord Himself who is the original source of all nectarean *rasas* arising as *sañcārī-bhāvas* which are a part of *rasa*.

This is clearly seen in Kṛṣṇa's *dāmodara-līlā* wherein the Lord cried in fear of mother Yasoda's stick, and in the preliminary loving attrac-tion (*pūrva-rāga*) of the *gopīs* during the *rāsa-līlā*. In the case of fear, the particular fear which caused Kṛṣṇa to run away from Kālayavana should be understood as distinct from both the fear rising out of ignorance and transcendental fear. This is stated by Uddhava, *āri-bhayāt palāyanam*, "You flee out of fear of the enemy." (SB 3.4.16) However, if it were real fear then the intelligence of the wise would be erroneous, according to the *Bhāgavatāmṛta*. Such stories prevent the tasting of nectar, like restricting a horse with a halter.

|| 10.77.32 ||

yat-pāda-sevorjitayātma-vidyayā hinvanty anādyātma-viparyaya-graham

labhanta ātmīyam anantam aiśvaraṁ kuto nu mohaḥ paramasya sad-gateḥ

TRANSLATION

By virtue of self-realization fortified by service rendered to His feet, devotees of the Lord dispel the bodily concept of life, which has bewildered the soul since time immemorial. Thus they attain eternal glory in His personal association. How, then, can that Supreme Truth, the destination of all genuine saints, be subject to illusion?

COMMENTARY

The impossibility of Kṛṣṇa's being fooled by Śālva's tricks is further explained in this verse, which states that Kṛṣṇa's devotees can never be bewildered, so what to speak of the Lord. Therefore, how was it possible for Śālva, a mundane mortal, to bewilder Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead? Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the goal of the saintly devotees, who remove the endless delusion of being happy or sad by knowledge of the Lord nourished (*ūrjitayā:puṣṭā*) by service to His lotus feet. Such devotees attain the opulence of having an eternal personal relationship (*labhanta ātmīyam anantam aiśvaraṁ*) with Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual world. How could any type of illusion possibly affect the Supreme Personality of Godhead at any time? Therefore these statements are not true.

|| 10.77.33 ||

taṁ śastra-pūgaiḥ praharantam ojasā śālvaṁ śaraiḥ śaurir amogha-vikramaḥ

viddhvācchinad varma dhanuḥ śiro-maṇiṁ saubhaṁ ca śatror gadayā ruroja ha

TRANSLATION

While Śālva continued to hurl torrents of weapons at Him with great force, Lord Kṛṣṇa, whose prowess never fails, shot His arrows at Śālva, wounding

him and shattering his armor, bow and crest jewel. Then with His club the Lord smashed His enemy's Saubha airship.

COMMENTARY

After defeating the opinion of others, Śukadeva continues the story. Kṛṣṇa broke (*ruroja*) Śālva's aircraft with His club.

|| 10.77.34 ||

tat kṛṣṇa-hasteritayā vicūrṇitaṁ papāta toye gadayā sahasradhā

visṛjya tad bhū-talam āsthito gadām udyamya śālvo 'cyutam abhyagād drutam

TRANSLATION

Shattered into thousands of pieces by Lord Kṛṣṇa's club, the Saubha airship plummeted into the water. Śālva abandoned it, stationed himself on the ground, took up his club and rushed toward Lord Acyuta.

COMMENTARY

The Saubha craft (*tat*) fell into the water after being smashed into a thousand pieces by Kṛṣṇa's club.

|| 10.77.35 ||

ādhāvataḥ sa-gadaṁ tasya bāhuṁ bhallena chittvātha rathāṅgam adbhutam

vadhāya śālvasya layārka-sannibhaṁ bibhrad babhau sārka ivodayācalaḥ

TRANSLATION

As Śālva rushed at Him, the Lord shot a bhalla dart and cut off his arm that held the club. Having finally decided to kill Śālva, Kṛṣṇa then raised His Sudarśana disc weapon, which resembled the sun at the time of universal annihilation. The brilliantly shining Lord appeared like the easternmost mountain bearing the rising sun.

|| 10.77.36 ||

jahāra tenaiva śiraḥ sa-kuṇḍalaṁ kirīṭa-yuktaṁ puru-māyino hariḥ

vajreṇa vṛtrasya yathā purandaro babhūva hāheti vacas tadā nṛṇām

TRANSLATION

Employing His disc, Lord Hari removed that great magician's head with its earrings and crown, just as Purandara had used his thunderbolt to cut off Vṛtra's head. Seeing this, all of Śālva's followers cried out, "Alas, alas!"

|| 10.77.37 ||

tasmin nipatite pāpe saubhe ca gadayā hate

nedur dundubhayo rājan divi deva-gaṇeritāḥ

sakhīnām apacitiṁ kurvan dantavakro ruṣābhyagāt

TRANSLATION

With the sinful Śālva now dead and his Saubha airship destroyed, the heavens resounded with kettledrums played by groups of demigods. Then Dantavakra, wanting to avenge the death of his friends, furiously attacked the Lord.

COMMENTARY

After performing the last rites for his friends like Śiśupāla, Dantavakra took revenge by angrily attacking Kṛṣṇa.

Thus ends the commentary on the Seventy-seventh Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

The Killing of Dantavakra, Vidūratha and Romaharṣaṇa

|| 10.78.1-2 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

śiśupālasya śālvasya pauṇḍrakasyāpi durmatiḥ

para-loka-gatānāṁ ca kurvan pārokṣya-sauhṛdam

ekaḥ padātiḥ saṅkruddho gadā-pāṇiḥ prakampayan

padbhyām imāṁ mahā-rāja mahā-sattvo vyadṛśyata

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Acting out of friendship for Śiśupāla, Śālva and Pauṇḍraka, who had all passed on to the next world, the wicked Dantavakra appeared on the battlefield in a great rage, O King. All alone, on foot and wielding a club in his hand, the mighty warrior shook the earth with his footsteps.

COMMENTARY

In this chapter, Kṛṣṇa kills Dantavakra and Vidūratha, and Balarāma kills the son of Romaharṣaṇa during His pilgrimage. These two verses describe how Dantavakra took revenge for the death of his friends. Though they were not present, out of friendship Dantavakra wanted to complete their death rites by killing Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.78.3 ||

taṁ tathāyāntam ālokya gadām ādāya satvaraḥ

avaplutya rathāt kṛṣṇaḥ sindhuṁ veleva pratyadhāt

TRANSLATION

Seeing Dantavakra approach, Lord Kṛṣṇa quickly picked up His club, jumped down from His chariot and stopped His advancing opponent just as the shore holds back the ocean.

COMMENTARY

Seeing His opponent on foot, Kṛṣṇa dismounted (*avaplutya*) from His chariot. Kṛṣṇa stopped Dantavakra just as the shore checks (*vela*) the ocean waves.

|| 10.78.4 ||

gadām udyamya kārūṣo mukundaṁ prāha durmadaḥ

diṣṭyā diṣṭyā bhavān adya mama dṛṣṭi-pathaṁ gataḥ

TRANSLATION

Raising his club, the reckless King of Karūṣa said to Lord Mukunda, “What luck! What luck—to have You come before me today!”

COMMENTARY

Dantavakra, who was born in Karūṣa (*kārūṣo*), raised his club. Goddess Sarasvatī has revealed the following hidden meaning of this verse: Being freed of false pride (*durmada*), Dantavakra spoke to Mukunda, who had come in his third lifetime to give him liberation (*mukti-dānārtham*). Dantavakra said, “After waiting three lifetimes for the *brāhmaṇa’s* curse to run its course, today (*adya*) I am seeing my master who gives liberation. This is very auspicious (*diṣṭyā diṣṭyā:bhadraṁ bhadraṁ*)!” *Distyā* is repeated twice in jubilation.

|| 10.78.5 ||

tvaṁ mātuleyo naḥ kṛṣṇa mitra-dhruṅ māṁ jighāṁsasi

atas tvāṁ gadayā manda haniṣye vajra-kalpayā

TRANSLATION

“You are our maternal cousin, Kṛṣṇa, but You committed violence against my friends, and now You want to kill me also. Therefore, fool, I will kill You with my thunderbolt club.”

COMMENTARY

The word *mātuleya* indicates that Kṛṣṇa was a maternal cousin of Dantavakra because his mother, Śrutaśravā, was the sister of Kṛṣṇa’s father, Vasudeva. Dantavakra said, “Though You are my Lord, You have now appeared as my cousin. Nevertheless, it is proper that You desire to kill me, who am envious (*mitra-dhruṅ*) of my own cousin.”

If one takes an alternate grammatical division of the third line of this verse as: *atas tvāṁ gadayā amanda*, then Dantavakra says, “My dear Kṛṣṇa, You are *amanda* (not foolish). Therefore, with Your club, which is as powerful as a thunderbolt (*vajra-kalpayā*), You will kill me and I will attain (*haniṣye:prāpsyāmi*) You by going back home, back to Godhead. I am describing Your club in this way to attract the common people. However, the real power of Your club is not exhibited in killing such an insignificant person as myself.”

|| 10.78.6 ||

tarhy ānṛṇyam upaimy ajña mitrāṇāṁ mitra-vatsalaḥ

bandhu-rūpam ariṁ hatvā vyādhiṁ deha-caraṁ yathā

TRANSLATION

“Then, O unintelligent one, I who am obliged to my friends will have repaid my debt to them by killing You, my enemy disguised as a relative, who are like a disease within my body.”

COMMENTARY

Dantavakra said, “Furthermore, that person who attains You by thinking of You will deliver his friends. No one is more intelligent (*ajña*) than You! Out of affection for my friends, I will free myself of my debt to them by liberating them through knowledge (*hatvā jñātvā*) of You. According to mundane perception You seem to be an enemy, but actually You are the true friend (*bandhu-rūpam*) of everyone. Situated within one’s body (*deha-caraṁ*) as the Supersoul, You are the supreme object of meditation (*vyādhim*).”

Vyādhim also means one who takes away all mental distress, suffering and sickness.

|| 10.78.7 ||

evaṁ rūkṣais tudan vākyaiḥ kṛṣṇaṁ totrair iva dvipam

gadayātāḍayan mūrdhni siṁha-vad vyanadac ca saḥ

TRANSLATION

Thus trying to harass Lord Kṛṣṇa with harsh words, as one might prick an elephant with sharp goads, Dantavakra struck the Lord on the head with his club and roared like a lion.

COMMENTARY

After harassing the Lord with harsh words, as one pricks an elephant with a sharp goad, Dantavakra hit Kṛṣṇa on the head with his club. In this verse the events are described according to material vision.

|| 10.78.8 ||

gadayābhihato 'py ājau na cacāla yadūdvahaḥ

kṛṣṇo 'pi tam ahan gurvyā kaumodakyā stanāntare

TRANSLATION

Although hit by Dantavakra's club, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the deliverer of the Yadus, did not budge from His place on the battlefield. Rather, with His massive Kaumodakī club the Lord struck Dantavakra in the middle of his chest.

|| 10.78.9 ||

gadā-nirbhinna-hṛdaya udvaman rudhiraṁ mukhāt

prasārya keśa-bāhv-aṅghrīn dharaṇyāṁ nyapatad vyasuḥ

TRANSLATION

His heart shattered by the club's blow, Dantavakra vomited blood and fell lifeless to the ground, his hair disheveled and his arms and legs sprawling.

|| 10.78.10 ||

tataḥ sūkṣmataraṁ jyotiḥ kṛṣṇam āviśad adbhutam

paśyatāṁ sarva-bhūtānāṁ yathā caidya-vadhe nṛpa

TRANSLATION

A most subtle and wondrous spark of light then [rose from the demon's body and] entered Lord Kṛṣṇa while everyone looked on, O King, just as when Śiśupāla was killed.

|| 10.78.11 ||

vidūrathas tu tad-bhrātā bhrāṭṛ-śoka-pariplutaḥ

āgacchad asi-carmābhyām ucchvasaṁs taj-jighāṁsayā

TRANSLATION

But then Dantavakra's brother Vidūratha, immersed in sorrow over his brother's death, came forward breathing heavily, sword and shield in hand. He wanted to kill the Lord.

|| 10.78.12 ||

tasya cāpatataḥ kṛṣṇaś cakreṇa kṣura-neminā

śiro jahāra rājendra sa-kirīṭaṁ sa-kuṇḍalam

TRANSLATION

O best of kings, as Vidūratha fell upon Him, Lord Kṛṣṇa used His razor-edged Sudarśana disc to remove his head, complete with its helmet and earrings.

|| 10.78.13-15 ||

evaṁ saubhaṁ ca śālvaṁ ca dantavakraṁ sahānujam

hatvā durviṣahān anyair īḍitaḥ sura-mānavaiḥ

munibhiḥ siddha-gandharvair vidyādhara-mahoragaiḥ

apsarobhiḥ pitṛ-gaṇair yakṣaiḥ kinnara-cāraṇaiḥ

upagīyamāna-vijayaḥ kusumair abhivarṣitaḥ

vṛtaś ca vṛṣṇi-pravarair viveśālaṅkṛtāṁ purīm

TRANSLATION

Having thus destroyed Śālva and his Saubha airship, along with Dantavakra and his younger brother, all of whom were invincible before any other opponent, the Lord was praised by demigods, human beings and great sages, by Siddhas, Gandharvas, Vidyādharas and Mahoragas, and also by Apsarās, Pitās, Yakṣas, Kinnaras and Cāraṇas. As they sang His glories and showered Him with flowers, the Supreme Lord entered His festively decorated capital city in the company of the most eminent Vṛṣṇis.

|| 10.78.16 ||

evaṁ yogeśvaraḥ kṛṣṇo bhagavān jagad-īśvaraḥ

īyate paśu-dṛṣṭīnāṁ nirjito jayatīti saḥ

TRANSLATION

Thus Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the master all mystic power and Lord of the universe, is ever victorious. Only those of beastly vision think He sometimes suffers defeat.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa's victories were not amazing for materialists like Duryodhana, who was inimical to the Lord. To those whose vision is like that of animals (*paśu-dṛṣṭīnāṁ*), Kṛṣṇa seems to have abandoned Mathurā and then been defeated two or three times by Jarāsandha and others. Specific details about the killing of Dantavakra are found in the Uttara-khaṇḍa (279) of the *Padma Purāṇa*: *atha śiśupālaṁ nihataṁ śrutvā dantavakraḥ kṛṣṇena saha yoddhuṁ mathurām ājagāma. kṛṣṇas tu tac chrutvā ratham āruhya mathurām āyayau*. "Upon hearing that Śiśupāla had been killed, Dantavakra went to Mathurā to fight Kṛṣṇa. Hearing about this, Kṛṣṇa mounted his chariot and went to Mathurā."

> *tayor dantavakra-vāsudevayor aho-rātraṁ mathurā-dvāri*
>
> *saṅgrāmaḥ samavartata. kṛṣṇas tu gadayā taṁ jaghāna.*
>
> *sa tu cūrṇita-sarvāṅgo vajra-nirbhinno mahīdhara iva gatāsur*
> *avani-tale nipapāta. so 'pi hareḥ sārūpyeṇa yogi-gamyaṁ*
>
> *nityānanda-sukha-daṁ śāśvataṁ paramaṁ padam avāpa*

> "Day and night Kṛṣṇa and Dantavakra fought at the gate of Mathurā. Kṛṣṇa beat Dantavakra with His club until he fell lifeless to the ground, all his limbs smashed like a mountain shattered by a lightning bolt. Dantavakra received an eternal blissful form similar to Hari's, and thus he also achieved the abode of the Lord attainable by perfect *yogīs*, which bestows the happiness of everlasting spiritual bliss."

itthaṁ jaya-vijayau sanakādi-śāpa-vyājena kevalaṁ

bhagavato līlārthaṁ saṁsṛtāv avatīrya janma-traye ’pi

tenaiva nihatau janma-trayāvasāne muktim avāptau

“Thus Jaya and Vijaya, on the pretext of the curse of the four Kumāras, appeared on earth three times to facilitate the pastimes of the Lord. In three consecutive lifetimes they were killed by the Lord Himself, and then they attained liberation.” [Hiraṇyākṣa, Hiraṇyakaśipu; Rāvaṇa, Kumbhakarṇa; Śiśupāla, Dantavakra]

In this passage from the *Padma Purāṇa* the words *kṛṣṇas tu tac chrutvā*, “when Kṛṣṇa heard this,” indicate that Kṛṣṇa heard from Nārada, who travels as swiftly as the mind, that Dantavakra had gone to Mathurā. Therefore immediately after killing Śālva, without first entering Dvārakā, Kṛṣṇa reached Mathurā in a single moment on His chariot, which also moves as swiftly as the mind, and there He saw Dantavakra. Thus it is that even today, by the gate of Mathurā facing the direction of Dvārakā, there is a village known in the vernacular as Datihā, a name derived from the Sanskrit *dantavakra-ha*, “killer of Dantavakra.’’ This village was founded by Kṛṣṇa’s great-grandson Vajranābha.

The same section of the Padma Purāṇa also includes the following words:

kṛṣṇo ’pi taṁ hatvā yamunām uttīrya nanda-vrajaṁ

gatvā sotkaṇṭhau pitarāv abhivādyāśvāsya tābhyāṁ

sāśru-sekam āliṅgitaḥ sakala-gopa-vṛddhān praṇamya

bahu-vastrābharaṇādibhis tatra-sthān santarpayām āsa

“After killing the wicked demon Vidūratha, Kṛṣṇa crossed the Yamunā and went to Nanda Vraja, where He greeted and consoled His aggrieved parents. Nanda Baba and Yaśodā drenched Kṛṣṇa with tears and embraced Him. Kṛṣṇa then offered obeisances to the elder cowherd men, and satisfied all the residents with abundant gifts of clothing, ornaments and so on.”

kālindyāḥ puline ramye puṇya-vṛkṣa-samācite

gopa-nārībhir aniśaṁ krīḍayām āsa keśavaḥ

ramya-keli-sukhenaiva gopa-veśa-dharaḥ prabhuḥ

bahu-prema-rasenātra māsa-dvayam uvāsa ha

"Keśava sported continuously with the Vraja-gopīs on the beautiful bank of the Kālindī, which was embellished with auspicious trees. Dressed as a cowherd boy, Kṛṣṇa stayed there for two months immersed in deep love enjoying various pastimes of blissful reciprocation."

atha tatra-sthā nanda-gopādayaḥ sarve janāḥ

putra-dārādi-sahitā vāsudeva-prasādena

divya-rūpa-dharā vimānam ārūḍhāḥ paramaṁ

vaikuṇṭha-lokam avāpuḥ. kṛṣṇas tu nanda-gopa-

vrajaukasāṁ sarveṣāṁ nirāmayaṁ sva-padaṁ dattvā

divi deva-gaṇaiḥ saṁstūyamāno dvāravatīṁ viveśa

"Then Nanda Mahārāja, all the cowherd men with their wives and children, all in their transcendental forms, boarded a celestial airplane and went to the supreme Vaikuṇṭha planet [Goloka Vṛndāvana] by Vāsudeva's mercy. Kṛṣṇa, however, after bestowing on Nanda Gopa and all the Vrajavāsīs His own transcendental abode, which is free of all disease, returned to dvārakā as the demigods in the sky chanted His glories." Crossing over the Yamunā, which is stated above in the *Padma Purāṇa*, means Kṛṣṇa bathed in the Yamunā. After killing the demon Vidūratha it was proper to bathe before going to Vraja.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī comments on this in *Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta* (1.488-89):

vrajeśāder aṁśa-bhūtā ye droṇādyā avātaran

kṛṣṇas tān eva vaikuṇṭhe prāhiṇod iti sāmpratam

preṣṭhebhyo 'pi priyatamair janair gokula-vāsibhiḥ

vṛndāraṇye sadaivāsau vihāraṁ kurute hariḥ

"Since Droṇa and other demigods had previously descended to earth to merge as partial expansions into Nanda Mahārāja, the King of Vraja, and other devotees in Vṛndāvana, at this time it was these demigod expansions whom Kṛṣṇa sent off to Vaikuṇṭha. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is perpetually enjoying pastimes in Vṛndāvana with His intimate devotees, the residents of Gokula, who are dearer to Him than any other devotees."

In the passage from the *Padma Purāṇa* cited above, the word *putra* in the phrase *nanda-gopādayaḥ sarve janāḥ putra-dārādi-sahitāḥ*, "Nanda Gopa and the others, together with their children and wives" refers to such sons as Kṛṣṇa, Śridāmā and Subala, while the word *dāra* refers to such wives as Śrī Yaśodā and Kīrtidā, the mother of Rādhārānī. All the people (*sarve janāḥ*) living in Vraja-maṇḍala went to Goloka,

which is the supreme Vaikuṇṭha planet. The phrase *divya-rūpa-dharāḥ* indicates that in Goloka they engage in pastimes appropriate to demigods, not those suited to humans, as in Gokula. Just as the inhabitants of Ayodhya went to Vaikuṇṭha in their selfsame bodies during Rāma's advent, similarly, during Kṛṣṇa's appearance those living in Vraja went in their bodies to the spiritual world.

The *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* confirms Kṛṣṇa's journey from Dvārakā to Vraja in the following verse:

> *yarhy ambujākṣāpasasāra bho bhavān kurūn madhūn vātha*
>
> *suhṛd-didṛkṣayā/ tatrābda-koṭi-pratimaḥ kṣaṇo bhavet*
>
> "O lotus-eyed Lord, whenever You go away to Mathurā, Vṛndā-vana or Hastināpura to meet Your friends and relatives, every moment of Your absence seems like a million years." (SB 1.11.9)

Śrī Kṛṣṇa had been harboring a desire to go see His friends and relatives in Vraja ever since Balarāma had gone there, but His mother, father and other elders in Dvārakā had refused to give Him permission. Now, however, after the killing of Śālva, when Kṛṣṇa heard from Nārada that Dantavakra had gone to Mathurā, no one could object to His going there immediately without first entering Dvārakā. After killing Dantavakra, Kṛṣṇa would have the opportunity to meet with His friends and relatives living in Vraja.

Considering this, and also remembering Uddhava's allusion to the *gopīs* in the words *gāyanti te viśada-karma* (SB 10.71.9), Kṛṣṇa went to Vraja to dispel the feelings of separation of the inhabitants. For two months Kṛṣṇa enjoyed in Vṛndāvana just as before, previous to His leaving there to kill Kaṁsa in Mathurā. Then, at the end of two months, Kṛṣṇa withdrew His Vraja pastimes from mundane eyes by taking the demigod portions of His parents and other relatives and friends to Vaikuṇṭha. Thus, in one complete plenary manifestation Kṛṣṇa went to Goloka in the spiritual world, in another He remained perpetually enjoying in Vraja while invisible to material eyes, and in yet another form Kṛṣṇa went alone on His chariot back to Dvārakā.

The people of Śaurasena province thought that after killing Dantavakra, Kṛṣṇa had paid a visit to His parents and other dear ones and now was returning to Dvārakā. The people of Vraja, on the other hand, could not understand where Kṛṣṇa had suddenly gone, so they were totally astonished.

Śukadeva thought that Parīkṣit Mahārāja might think, "How is it that the same Kṛṣṇa who caused the cowherds to attain Vaikuṇṭha in their selfsame bodies also caused the

residents of Dvārakā to attain such an inauspicious condition in the course of His *mauṣala-līlā?*" Understanding that this would upset Parīkṣit because he identified with the Yadus, Śukadeva Gosvāmī did not tell him this story from the *Padma Purāṇa*. However, Śukadeva Gosvāmī vaguely suggests the story by using the verb *viveśā* (entered) in verse 15, which means, "Kṛṣṇa finally entered Dvārakā with His associates after having performed other pastimes that are already known, so I will not mention them."

Since *Śrīmad Bhāgavataṁ* does not describe how Kṛṣṇa's *vraja-līlā* ended, the account given in the *Padma Purāṇa* should be accepted as true by all. Thus *Śrī Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī*, Sanātana Gosvāmī's commentary on the Tenth Canto, gives the following sequential list of pastimes: First was the journey on the occasion of the solar eclipse, then the Rājasūya assembly, then the gambling match and attempted disrobing of Draupadī, then the Pāṇḍavas' exile to the forest, then the killing of Śālva and Dantavakra, then Kṛṣṇa's visit to Vṛndāvana and His winding up of the Vṛndāvana pastimes.

|| 10.78.17 ||

śrutvā yuddhodyamaṁ rāmaḥ kurūṇāṁ saha pāṇḍavaiḥ

tīrthābhiṣeka-vyājena madhya-sthaḥ prayayau kila

TRANSLATION

Lord Balarāma then heard that the Kurus were preparing for war with the Pāṇḍavas. Being neutral, He departed on the pretext of going to bathe in holy places.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa killed all the wicked demons up to Vidūratha and then put aside His weapons. But Balarāma did this only after killing Balvala and Romaharṣaṇa. Hearing that the Kauravas wanted to fight the Pāṇḍavas, Balarāma thought, "Since I have friendship with Duryodhana and Yudhiṣṭhira, surely they will both invite Me on their side. But whose side should I choose?" Thus Balarāma left on the pretext of bathing in holy places.

|| 10.78.18 ||

snātvā prabhāse santarpya devarṣi-pitṛ-mānavān

sarasvatīṁ prati-srotaṁ yayau brāhmaṇa-saṁvṛtaḥ

TRANSLATION

After bathing at Prabhāsa and honoring the demigods, sages, forefathers and prominent human beings, He went in the company of brāhmaṇas to the portion of the Sarasvatī that flows westward into the sea.

COMMENTARY

Balarāma went to Sarasvatī and bathed in the part that flows westward into the sea.

|| 10.78.19-20 ||

pṛthūdakaṁ bindu-saras tritakūpaṁ sudarśanam

viśālaṁ brahma-tīrthaṁ ca cakraṁ prācīṁ sarasvatīm

yamunām anu yāny eva gaṅgām anu ca bhārata

jagāma naimiṣaṁ yatra ṛṣayaḥ satram āsate

TRANSLATION

Lord Balarāma visited the broad Bindu-saras Lake, Tritakūpa, Sudarśana, Viśāla, Brahma-tīrtha, Cakra-tīrtha and the eastward-flowing Sarasvatī. He also went to all the holy places along the Yamunā and the Ganges, O Bhārata, and then He came to the Naimiṣa forest, where great sages were performing an elaborate sacrifice.

COMMENTARY

Cakraṁ here refers to Cakra-tīrtha. Balarāma visited all the holy places along the Gaṇgā and Yamunā.

|| 10.78.21 ||

tam āgatam abhipretya munayo dīrgha-satriṇaḥ

abhinandya yathā-nyāyaṁ praṇamyotthāya cārcayan

TRANSLATION

Recognizing the Lord upon His arrival, the sages, who had been engaged in their sacrificial rituals for a long time, greeted Him properly by standing up, bowing down and worshiping Him.

|| 10.78.22 ||

so ’rcitaḥ sa-parīvāraḥ kṛtāsana-parigrahaḥ

romaharṣaṇam āsīnaṁ maharṣeḥ śiṣyam aikṣata

TRANSLATION

After being thus worshiped along with His entourage, the Lord accepted a seat of honor. Then He noticed that Romaharṣaṇa, Vyāsadeva's disciple, had remained seated.

COMMENTARY

Balarāma saw Romaharṣaṇa, the disciple of the Vyāsadeva (*maharṣeḥ*), the greatest of sages.

|| 10.78.23 ||

apratyutthāyinaṁ sūtam akṛta-prahvaṇāñjalim

adhyāsīnaṁ ca tān viprāṁś cukopodvīkṣya mādhavaḥ

TRANSLATION

Lord Balarāma became extremely angry upon seeing how this member of the sūta caste had failed to stand up, bow down or join his palms, and also how he was sitting above all the learned brāhmaṇas.

COMMENTARY

Due to arrogance, Romaharṣaṇa sat higher than the assembly of learned *brāhmaṇas*.

|| 10.78.24 ||

yasmād asāv imān viprān adhyāste pratiloma-jaḥ

dharma-pālāṁs tathaivāsmān vadham arhati durmatiḥ

TRANSLATION

[Lord Balarāma said:] Because this fool born from an improperly mixed marriage sits above all these brāhmaṇas and even above Me, the protector of religion, he deserves to die.

COMMENTARY

Balarāma said, "Romaharṣaṇa is sitting on a seat higher than Us and refusing to stand up."

|| 10.78.25-26 ||

ṛṣer bhagavato bhūtvā śiṣyo 'dhītya bahūni ca

setihāsa-purāṇāni dharma-śāstrāṇi sarvaśaḥ

adāntasyāvinītasya vṛthā paṇḍita-māninaḥ

na guṇāya bhavanti sma naṭasyevājitātmanaḥ

TRANSLATION

Although he is a disciple of the divine sage Vyāsa and has thoroughly learned many scriptures from him, including the lawbooks of religious duties and the epic histories and Purāṇas, all this study has not produced good qualities in him. Rather, his study of the scriptures is like an actor's studying his part, for he is not self-controlled or humble and vainly presumes himself a scholarly authority, though he has failed to conquer his own mind.

COMMENTARY

Balarāma continued, "Perhaps he is doing so out of ignorance. No, that cannot be because he is the disciple of Vyāsadeva (*ṛṣer bhagavato bhūtvā siṣyo*). Unfortunately, his study of scriptures has not produced any good qualities such as self-control (*dāntasyā*)."

|| 10.78.27 ||

etad-artho hi loke 'sminn avatāro mayā kṛtaḥ

vadhyā me dharma-dhvajinas te hi pātakino 'dhikāḥ

TRANSLATION

The very purpose of My descent into this world is to kill such hypocrites who pretend to be religious. Indeed, they are the most sinful rascals.

COMMENTARY

Someone may object, "Romaharṣaṇa may offend the *brāhmaṇas*, but how can You, the Supreme Lord, kill him when You are supposed to be without anger and pride?" Balarāma answers this in the present verse: "I appear in this world to kill hypocrites who make a show of religiosity (*dharma-dhvajinas*), and thereby establish real religious principles."

|| 10.78.28 ||

etāvad uktvā bhagavān nivṛtto 'sad-vadhād api

bhāvitvāt taṁ kuśāgreṇa kara-sthenāhanat prabhuḥ

TRANSLATION

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Although Lord Balarāma had stopped killing the impious, Romaharṣaṇa's death was inevitable. Thus, having spoken, the Lord killed him by picking up a blade of kuśa grass and touching him with its tip.

COMMENTARY

Since Romaharṣaṇa's death was destined and inevitable (*bhāvitvāt*), Balarāma killed him with a piece of *kusa* grass.

|| 10.78.29 ||

hāheti-vādinaḥ sarve munayaḥ khinna-mānasāḥ

ūcuḥ saṅkarṣaṇaṁ devam adharmas te kṛtaḥ prabho

TRANSLATION

All the sages cried out, "Alas, alas !" in great distress. They told Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa, "O master, You have committed an irreligious act!"

|| 10.78.30 ||

asya brahmāsanaṁ dattam asmābhir yadu-nandana

āyuś cātmāklamaṁ tāvad yāvat satraṁ samāpyate

TRANSLATION

"O favorite of the Yadus, we gave him the seat of the spiritual master and promised him long life and freedom from physical pain for as long as this sacrifice continues."

COMMENTARY

In this verse the *brāhmaṇas* answer the hypothetical question, “How can the killing of an irreligious son born of an improperly mixed marriage [a *kṣatriya* father and *brāhmaṇa* mother] be irreligious?”

The *brāhmaṇas* said, “We granted him the boon of no fatigue and long life for the duration of the sacrifice.”

|| 10.78.31-32 ||

ajānataivācaritas tvayā brahma-vadho yathā

yogeśvarasya bhavato nāmnāyo ’pi niyāmakaḥ

yady etad-brahma-hatyāyāḥ pāvanaṁ loka-pāvana

cariṣyati bhavāû loka-saṅgraho ’nanya-coditaḥ

TRANSLATION

“You have unknowingly killed a brāhmaṇa. Of course, even the injunctions of revealed scripture cannot dictate to You, the Lord of all mystic power. But if by Your own free will You nonetheless carry out the prescribed purification for this slaying of a brāhmaṇa, O purifier of the whole world, people in general will greatly benefit by Your example.”

COMMENTARY

(Text 31) The *brāhmaṇas* said, “Although You are omniscient, You have acted just like an ignorant man. Of course, for You there is no possibility of sin because You are the Lord of all mystic power (*yogeśvarasya*).”

(Text 32) “However, if You perform some purifying atonement for killing this *brāhmaṇa*, then the common people will be benefited and nothing more, since You are not motivated by anyone (*ananya-coditaḥ*) other than Yourself.”

|| 10.78.33 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

cariṣye vadha-nirveśaṁ lokānugraha-kāmyayā

niyamaḥ prathame kalpe yāvān sa tu vidhīyatām

TRANSLATION

The Personality of Godhead said: I will certainly perform the atonement for this killing, since I wish to show compassion to the people in general. Please, therefore, prescribe for Me whatever ritual is to be done first.

COMMENTARY

Balarāma said, "I will carry out this atonement (*nirveśaṁ: prāyaścittam*) for killing the *brāhmaṇa* according to the primary ritual (*prathame kalpe:mukhya-kalpe*)."

|| 10.78.34 ||

dīrgham āyur bataitasya sattvam indriyam eva ca

āśāsitaṁ yat tad brūte sādhaye yoga-māyayā

TRANSLATION

O sages, just say the word, and by My mystic power I shall restore everything you promised him-long life, strength and sensory power.

COMMENTARY

Balarāma said, "Since the *brāhmaṇas* are My mouth, I should not do anything which will break your promise. Please tell Me how I may make whatever you have spoken come true? Simply ask and I will give Romaharṣaṇa long life, strength (*sattvam*) and sharpness of the senses (*indriyam*)."

|| 10.78.35 ||

ṛṣaya ūcuḥ

astrasya tava vīryasya mṛtyor asmākam eva ca

yathā bhaved vacaḥ satyaṁ tathā rāma vidhīyatām

TRANSLATION

The sages said: Please see to it, O Rāma, that Your power and that of Your kuśa weapon, as well as our promise and Romaharṣaṇa's death, all remain intact.

COMMENTARY

The *brāhmaṇas* said, "You should arrange things in such a way that Your position, Your *kusa* grass weapon, the killing of Romaharṣaṇa, and our words as well will remain true."

|| 10.78.36 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

ātmā vai putra utpanna iti vedānuśāsanam

tasmād asya bhaved vaktā āyur-indriya-sattva-vān

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord said: The Vedas instruct us that one's own self takes birth again as one's son. Thus let Romaharṣaṇa's son become the speaker of the Purāṇas, and let him be endowed with long life, strong senses and stamina.

COMMENTARY

In this verse Balarāma fulfills their request by saying, "The *Vedas* say:

> *aṅgād aṅgāt sambhāvasi hṛdayād abhijāyase*
>
> *ātmā vai putra-nāmāsi sañjīva śaradaḥ śatam*
>
> 'You have taken birth from my various limbs and have arisen from my very heart. You are my own self in the form of my son. May you live through a hundred autumns.'" (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 6.4.8)

"Therefore Romaharṣaṇa's son, Ugraśrava, will recite the *Purāṇas* for you, and he will be blessed with long life and energy. Thus the weapon and Romaharṣaṇa's death will remain true. Yet at the same time in the form of his son, Romaharṣaṇa's long life and energy are assured and your promise will remain intact."

|| 10.78.37 ||

kiṁ vaḥ kāmo muni-śreṣṭhā brūtāhaṁ karavāṇy atha

ajānatas tv apacitiṁ yathā me cintyatāṁ budhāḥ

TRANSLATION

Please tell Me your desire, O best of sages, and I shall certainly fulfill it. And, O wise souls, please carefully determine My proper atonement, since I do not know what it might be.

COMMENTARY

Balarāma said, “First I should give some gift to you wise *brāhmaṇas* who will instruct Me on atonement. After that, you should think carefully and establish the proper atonement for Me, who am ignorant about this.”

|| 10.78.38 ||

ṛṣaya ūcuḥ

ilvalasya suto ghoro balvalo nāma dānavaḥ

sa dūṣayati naḥ satram etya parvaṇi parvaṇi

TRANSLATION

The sages said: A fearsome demon named Balvala, the son of Ilvala, comes here every new-moon day and contaminates our sacrifice.

COMMENTARY

The *brāhmaṇas* said, “On every dark moon day (*parvaṇi parvaṇi*) a demon contaminates our sacrifice.”

|| 10.78.39 ||

taṁ pāpaṁ jahi dāśārha tan naḥ śuśrūṣaṇaṁ param

pūya-śoṇita-vin-mūtra-surā-māṁsābhivarṣiṇam

TRANSLATION

O descendant of Daśārha, please kill that sinful demon, who pours down pus, blood, feces, urine, wine and meat upon us. This is the best service You can do for us.

|| 10.78.40 ||

tataś ca bhāratam varṣaṁ parītya su-samāhitaḥ

caritvā dvādaśa-māsāṁs tīrtha-snāyī viśudhyasi

TRANSLATION

Thereafter, for twelve months, You should circumambulate the land of Bhārata in a mood of serious meditation, executing austerities and bathing at various holy pilgrimage sites. In this way You will become purified.

COMMENTARY

The *brāhmaṇas* specify Balarāma's atonement in this verse. "You should travel around (*parītya*) Bhārata [India] for one year undergoing penance (*caritvā*) with fully concentrated mind and senses (*su-samāhitaḥ*). By this You will be purified."

Thus ends the commentary on the Seventy-eighth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Seventy-nine

Lord Balarāma Goes on Pilgrimage

|| 10.79.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

tataḥ parvaṇy upāvṛtte pracaṇḍaḥ pāṁśu-varṣaṇaḥ

bhīmo vāyur abhūd rājan pūya-gandhas tu sarvaśaḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Then, on the new-moon day, O King, a fierce and frightening wind arose, scattering dust all about and spreading the smell of pus everywhere.

COMMENTARY

In this chapter, Balarāma kills Balvala, goes on pilgrimage and returns to see the fighting of Bhīma and Duryodhana. Afterwards, He returns to Dvārakā. When the dark moon arrived (*upāvṛtte*) there was a strong wind filled with dust and the stench of pus.

|| 10.79.2 ||

tato ’medhya-mayaṁ varṣaṁ balvalena vinirmitam

abhavad yajña-śālāyāṁ so ’nvadṛśyata śūla-dhṛk

TRANSLATION

Next, onto the sacrificial arena came a downpour of abominable things sent by Balvala, after which the demon himself appeared, trident in hand.

|| 10.79.3-4 ||

taṁ vilokya bṛhat-kāyaṁ bhinnāñjana-cayopamam

tapta-tāmra-śikhā-śmaśruṁ daṁṣṭrogra-bhru-kuṭī-mukham

sasmāra mūṣalaṁ rāmaḥ para-sainya-vidāraṇam

halaṁ ca daitya-damanaṁ te tūrṇam upatasthatuḥ

TRANSLATION

The immense demon resembled a mass of black carbon. His topknot and beard were like molten copper, and his face had horrible fangs and furrowed eyebrows. Upon seeing him, Lord Balarāma thought of His club, which tears to pieces His enemies' armies, and His plow weapon, which punishes the demons. Thus summoned, His two weapons appeared before Him at once.

|| 10.79.5 ||

tam ākṛṣya halāgreṇa balvalaṁ gagane-caram

mūṣalenāhanat kruddho mūrdhni brahma-druhaṁ balaḥ

TRANSLATION

With the tip of His plow Lord Balarāma caught hold of the demon Balvala as he flew through the sky, and with His club the Lord angrily struck that harasser of brāhmaṇas on the head.

|| 10.79.6 ||

so 'patad bhuvi nirbhinna-lalāṭo 'sṛk samutsṛjan

muñcann ārta-svaraṁ śailo yathā vajra-hato 'ruṇaḥ

TRANSLATION

Balvala cried out in agony and fell to the ground, his forehead cracked open and gushing blood. He resembled a red mountain struck by a lightning bolt.

COMMENTARY

The demon appeared reddish with blood, like a mountain red with oxide.

|| 10.79.7 ||

saṁstutya munayo rāmaṁ prayujyāvitathāśiṣaḥ

abhyaṣiñcan mahā-bhāgā vṛtra-ghnaṁ vibudhā yathā

TRANSLATION

The exalted sages honored Lord Rāma with sincere prayers and awarded Him infallible blessings. Then they performed His ritual bath, just as the demigods had formally bathed Indra when he killed Vṛtra.

|| 10.79.8 ||

vaijayantīṁ dadur mālāṁ śrī-dhāmāmlāna-paṅkajāṁ

rāmāya vāsasī divye divyāny ābharaṇāni ca

TRANSLATION

They gave Lord Balarāma a Vaijayantī garland of unfading lotuses in which resided the goddess of fortune, and they also gave Him a set of divine garments and jewelry.

COMMENTARY

They gave Balarāma a Vaijayantī garland of unfading lotuses in which resided the goddess of fortune (*srī-dhāma amlāna-paṅkajāṁ*).

|| 10.79.9 ||

atha tair abhyanujñātaḥ kauśikīm etya brāhmaṇaiḥ

snātvā sarovaram agād yataḥ sarayūr āsravat

TRANSLATION

Then, given leave by the sages, the Lord went with a contingent of brāhmaṇas to the Kauśikī River, where He bathed. From there He went to the lake from which flows the river Sarayū.

COMMENTARY

Balarāma went to the lake from which the river Sarayū flows.

|| 10.79.10 ||

anu-srotena sarayūṁ prayāgam upagamya saḥ

snātvā santarpya devādīn jagāma pulahāśramam

TRANSLATION

The Lord followed the course of the Sarayū until He came to Prayāga, where He bathed and then performed rituals to propitiate the demigods and other living beings. Next He went to the āśrama of Pulaha Ṛṣi.

COMMENTARY

By following the course (*anu-srotena*) of the Sarayū, Balarāma eventually arrived in Prayāga.

|| 10.79.11-15 ||

gomatīṁ gaṇḍakīṁ snātvā vipāśāṁ śoṇa āplutaḥ

gayāṁ gatvā pitṝn iṣṭvā gaṅgā-sāgara-saṅgame

upaspṛśya mahendrādrau rāmaṁ dṛṣṭvābhivādya ca

sapta-godāvarīṁ veṇāṁ pampāṁ bhīmarathīṁ tataḥ

skandaṁ dṛṣṭvā yayau rāmaḥ śrī-śailaṁ giriśālayam

draviḍeṣu mahā-puṇyaṁ dṛṣṭvādriṁ veṅkaṭaṁ prabhuḥ

kāma-koṣṇīṁ purīṁ kāñcīṁ kāverīṁ ca sarid-varām

śrī-rangākhyaṁ mahā-puṇyaṁ yatra sannihito hariḥ

ṛṣabhādriṁ hareḥ kṣetraṁ dakṣiṇāṁ mathurāṁ tathā

sāmudraṁ setum agamat mahā-pātaka-nāśanam

TRANSLATION

Lord Balarāma bathed in the Gomatī, Gaṇḍakī and Vipāśā rivers, and also immersed Himself in the Śoṇa. He went to Gayā, where He worshiped His forefathers, and to the mouth of the Ganges, where He performed purifying ablutions. At Mount Mahendra He saw Lord Paraśurāma and offered Him prayers, and then He bathed in the seven branches of the Godāvarī River, and also in the rivers Veṇā, Pampā and Bhīmarathī. Then Lord Balarāma met Lord Skanda and visited Śrī-śaila, the abode of Lord Giriśa. In the southern provinces known as Draviḍa-deśa the Supreme Lord saw the sacred Veṅkaṭa Hill, as well as the cities of Kāmakoṣṇī and Kāñcī, the exalted Kāverī River and the most holy Śrī-raṅga, where Lord Kṛṣṇa has manifested Himself. From there He went to Ṛṣabha Mountain, where Lord Kṛṣṇa also lives, and to the southern Mathurā. Then He came to Setubandha, where the most grievous sins are destroyed.

COMMENTARY

Balarāma visited and bathed in each of the rivers such as the Gomatī, Gaṇḍakī and Vipāśā. Although His father and grandfather were still alive, it was on His father's order that Balarāma carefully worshiped (*pitṝn iṣṭvā*) His forefathers at Gayā. After bathing (*upaspṛśya*) at Gaṅgā Sāgara, Balarāma should have gone to Śrī Purusottama-kṣetra [Jagannātha Purī], which is nearby. But Balarāma did not go there. According to *Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī*, Balarāma wanted to avoid the embarrassment of having to worship Himself among the forms of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Balabhadra and Subhadrā. At Mahendra He offered prayers (*abhivādya*) to Paraśurāma (*rāmam*).

|| 10.79.16-17 ||

tatrāyutam adād dhenūr brāhmaṇebhyo halāyudhaḥ

kṛtamālāṁ tāmraparṇīṁ malayaṁ ca kulācalam

tatrāgastyaṁ samāsīnaṁ namaskṛtyābhivādya ca

yojitas tena cāśīrbhir anujñāto gato 'rṇavam

dakṣiṇaṁ tatra kanyākhyāṁ durgāṁ devīṁ dadarśa saḥ

TRANSLATION

There at Setubandha [Rāmeśvaram] Lord Halāyudha gave brāhmaṇas ten thousand cows in charity. He then visited the Kṛtamālā and Tāmraparṇī rivers and the great Malaya Mountains. In the Malaya range Lord Balarāma found Agastya Ṛṣi sitting in meditation. After bowing down to the sage, the Lord offered him prayers and then received blessings from him. Taking leave from Agastya, He proceeded to the shore of the southern ocean, where He saw Goddess Durgā in her form of Kanyā-kumārī.

|| 10.79.18 ||

tataḥ phālgunam āsādya pañcāpsarasam uttamam

viṣṇuḥ sannihito yatra snātvāsparśad gavāyutam

TRANSLATION

Next He went to Phālguna-tīrtha and bathed in the sacred Pañcāpsarā Lake, where Lord Viṣṇu had directly manifested Himself. At this place He gave away another ten thousand cows.

COMMENTARY

Bathing at Pañca-apsarasam, Balarāma gave (*asparśat*) ten thousand cows in charity.

|| 10.79.19-21 ||

tato 'bhivrajya bhagavān keralāṁs tu trigartakān

gokarṇākhyaṁ śiva-kṣetraṁ sānnidhyaṁ yatra dhūrjaṭeḥ

āryāṁ dvaipāyanīṁ dṛṣṭvā śūrpārakam agād balaḥ

tāpīṁ payoṣṇīṁ nirvindhyām upaspṛśyātha daṇḍakam

praviśya revām agamad yatra māhiṣmatī purī

manu-tīrtham upaspṛśya prabhāsaṁ punar āgamat

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord then traveled through the kingdoms of Kerala and Trigarta, visiting Lord Śiva's sacred city of Gokarṇa, where Lord Dhūrjaṭi [Śiva] directly manifests himself. After also visiting Goddess Pārvatī, who dwells on an island, Lord Balarāma went to the holy district of Śūrpāraka and bathed in the Tāpī, Payoṣṇī and Nirvindhyā rivers. He next entered the Daṇḍaka forest and went to the river Revā, along which the city of Māhiṣmatī is found. Then He bathed at Manu-tīrtha and finally returned to Prabhāsa.

|| 10.79.22 ||

śrutvā dvijaiḥ kathyamānaṁ kuru-pāṇḍava-saṁyuge

sarva-rājanya-nidhanaṁ bhāraṁ mene hṛtaṁ bhuvaḥ

TRANSLATION

The Lord heard from some brāhmaṇas how all the kings involved in the battle between the Kurus and Pāṇḍavas had been killed. From this He concluded that the earth was now relieved of her burden.

|| 10.79.23 ||

sa bhīma-duryodhanayor gadābhyāṁ yudhyator mṛdhe

vārayiṣyan vinaśanaṁ jagāma yadu-nandanaḥ

TRANSLATION

Wanting to stop the club fight then raging between Bhīma and Duryodhana on the battlefield, Lord Balarāma went to Kurukṣetra.

COMMENTARY

Balarāma went to the battlefield (*vinaśanaṁ*) of Kurukṣetra to prevent Bhīma and Duryodhana from fighting.

|| 10.79.24 ||

yudhiṣṭhiras tu taṁ dṛṣṭvā yamau kṛṣṇārjunāv api

abhivādyābhavaṁs tuṣṇīṁ kiṁ vivakṣur ihāgataḥ

TRANSLATION

When Yudhiṣṭhira, Lord Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna and the twin brothers Nakula and Sahadeva saw Lord Balarāma, they offered Him respectful obeisances but said nothing, thinking "What has He come here to tell us?"

COMMENTARY

They remained silent, worried about what Balarāma had come there to say.

|| 10.79.25 ||

gadā-pāṇī ubhau dṛṣṭvā saṁrabdhau vijayaiṣiṇau

maṇḍalāni vicitrāṇi carantāv idam abravīt

TRANSLATION

Lord Balarāma found Duryodhana and Bhīma with clubs in their hands, each furiously striving for victory over the other as they circled about skillfully. The Lord addressed them as follows.

|| 10.79.26 ||

yuvāṁ tulya-balau vīrau he rājan he vṛkodara

ekaṁ prāṇādhikaṁ manye utaikaṁ śikṣayādhikam

TRANSLATION

[Lord Balarāma said:] King Duryodhana! And Bhīma! Listen! You two warriors are equal in fighting prowess. I know that one of you has greater physical power, while the other is better trained in technique.

COMMENTARY

Balarāma said, “Bhīma is greater in physical strength and Duryodhana is greater in knowledge of club fighting.”

|| 10.79.27 ||

tasmād ekatarasyeha yuvayoḥ sama-vīryayoḥ

na lakṣyate jayo ’nyo vā viramatv aphalo raṇaḥ

TRANSLATION

Since you are so evenly matched in fighting prowess, I do not see how either of you can win or lose this duel. Therefore please stop this useless battle.

COMMENTARY

Balarāma said, “Because you are equally matched, neither of you can win this battle (*raṇaḥ*).’”

|| 10.79.28 ||

na tad-vākyaṁ jagṛhatur baddha-vairau nṛpārthavat

anusmarantāv anyonyaṁ duruktaṁ duṣkṛtāni ca

TRANSLATION

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] They did not accept Lord Balarāma's request, O King, although it was logical, for their mutual enmity was irrevocable. Each of them constantly remembered the insults and injuries he had suffered from the other.

COMMENTARY

However, they did not listen to Balarāma's meaningful (*artha-vat*) words.

|| 10.79.29 ||

diṣṭaṁ tad anumanvāno rāmo dvāravatīṁ yayau

ugrasenādibhiḥ prītair jñātibhiḥ samupāgataḥ

TRANSLATION

Concluding that the battle was the arrangement of fate, Lord Balarāma went back to Dvārakā. There He was greeted by Ugrasena and His other relatives, who were all delighted to see Him.

COMMENTARY

The word *diṣṭam*, "fate," indicates that the battle between Bhīma and Duryodhana had been enjoined by Kṛṣṇa and set into motion by Him.

|| 10.79.30 ||

taṁ punar naimiṣaṁ prāptam ṛṣayo 'yājayan mudā

kratv-aṅgaṁ kratubhiḥ sarvair nivṛttākhila-vigraham

TRANSLATION

Later Lord Balarāma returned to Naimiṣāraṇya, where the sages joyfully engaged Him, the embodiment of all sacrifice, in performing various kinds of Vedic sacrifice. Lord Balarāma was now retired from warfare.

COMMENTARY

The sages engaged Balarāma, the embodiment of all sacrifices (*kratv-aṅgaṁ*), in performing Vedic sacrifices.

|| 10.79.31 ||

tebhyo viśuddhaṁ vijñānaṁ bhagavān vyatarad vibhuḥ

yenaivātmany ado viśvam ātmānaṁ viśva-gaṁ viduḥ

TRANSLATION

The all-powerful Lord Balarāma bestowed upon the sages pure spiritual knowledge, by which they could see the whole universe within Him and also see Him pervading everything.

COMMENTARY

Balarāma bestowed wisdom on the sages so they could understand that the universe was within the Paramātmā (*ātmani*), and that the Paramātmā was within the universe.

|| 10.79.32 ||

sva-patyāvabhṛtha-snāto jñāti-bandhu-suhṛd-vṛtaḥ

reje sva-jyotsnayevenduḥ su-vāsāḥ suṣṭhv alaṅkṛtaḥ

TRANSLATION

After executing with His wife the avabhṛtha ablutions, the beautifully dressed and ornamented Lord Balarāma, encircled by His immediate family and other relatives and friends, looked as splendid as the moon surrounded by its effulgent rays.

|| 10.79.33 ||

īdṛg-vidhāny asaṅkhyāni balasya bala-śālinaḥ

anantasyāprameyasya māyā-martyasya santi hi

TRANSLATION

Countless other such pastimes were performed by mighty Balarāma, the unlimited and immeasurable Supreme Lord, whose mystic Yogamāyā power makes Him appear to be a human being.

COMMENTARY

There are many stories about Balarāma whose human form was His svarūpa (*māyā-martyasya*). *Svarūpa* can be equated with the word *māyā* because the *śruti*, or *Vedic*

mantras, state: *svarūpa-bhutayā nitya-saktyā māyākhyayā*, "The Supreme Lord possesses His own eternal potency known as *māyā*, which is manifests from His own transcendental form."

|| 10.79.34 ||

yo 'nusmareta rāmasya karmāṇy adbhuta-karmaṇaḥ

sāyaṁ prātar anantasya viṣṇoḥ sa dayito bhavet

TRANSLATION

All the activities of the unlimited Lord Balarāma are amazing. Anyone who regularly remembers them at dawn and dusk will become very dear to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Viṣṇu.

COMMENTARY

One who regularly remembers the amazing pastimes of Balarāma at dawn and dusk will become very dear to Kṛṣṇa (*viṣṇoḥ*), the younger brother of Balarāma.

Thus ends the commentary on the Seventy-ninth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Eighty

The Brāhmaṇa Sudāmā Visits Lord Kṛṣṇa in Dvārakā

|| 10.80.1 ||

śrī-rājovāca

bhagavan yāni cānyāni mukundasya mahātmanaḥ

vīryāṇy ananta-vīryasya śrotum icchāmi he prabho

TRANSLATION

King Parīkṣit said: My lord, O master, I wish to hear about other valorous deeds performed by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Mukunda, whose valor is unlimited.

COMMENTARY

In this chapter, Sudāmā comes to Dvārakā and is worshiped by Kṛṣṇa. After questioning him lovingly, Kṛṣṇa reminisces about their life together in *gurukula*.

Parīkṣit Mahārāja said, “O master, I want to hear other exploits of Mukunda.”

|| 10.80.2 ||

ko nu śrutvāsakṛd brahmann uttamaḥśloka-sat-kathāḥ

virameta viśeṣa-jño viṣaṇṇaḥ kāma-mārgaṇaiḥ

TRANSLATION

O brāhmaṇa, how could anyone who knows the essence of life and is disgusted with endeavoring for sense gratification give up the transcendental topics of Lord Uttamaḥśloka after hearing them repeatedly?

COMMENTARY

We see many persons who, even after hearing the topics of Kṛṣṇa repeatedly, nevertheless cease from hearing. The *jñānīs* fixed on the impersonal Brahman are an example of those who give up those topics. But one who has realized that the essence of life (*viśeṣa-jño*) is to constantly relish Kṛṣṇa's transcendental form, qualities and pastimes never gives up those topics. One who experiences the taste of hearing about Kṛṣṇa's fascinating pastimes automatically becomes disgusted with the inferior taste of material pleasure (*viṣaṇṇaḥ kāma-mārgaṇaiḥ*). Hearing anything other than topics of Kṛṣṇa is useless.

|| 10.80.3 ||

sā vāg yayā tasya guṇān gṛṇīte karau ca tat-karma-karau manaś ca

smared vasantaṁ sthira-jaṅgameṣu śṛṇoti tat-puṇya-kathāḥ sa karṇaḥ

TRANSLATION

Actual speech is that which describes the qualities of the Lord, real hands are those that work for Him, a true mind is that which always remembers Him dwelling within everything moving and nonmoving, and actual ears are those that listen to sanctifying topics about Him.

COMMENTARY

Parīkṣit Mahārāja said, "Not only the ears, but all organs of the body become useless without a connection with Kṛṣṇa." In the Second Canto, Third Chapter, verse 20 Śaunaka Ṛṣi made a similar statement: *jihvāsatī dārdurikeva sūta*, "The tongues of those who fail to sing of the Lord are useless as those of frogs." The senses should work together in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In other words, whatever the eyes or the ears experience, the mind should simply remember Kṛṣṇa, who is within all things.

|| 10.80.4 ||

śiras tu tasyobhaya-liṅgam ānamet tad eva yat paśyati tad dhi cakṣuḥ

aṅgāni viṣṇor atha taj-janānāṁ pādodakaṁ yāni bhajanti nityam

TRANSLATION

An actual head is one that bows down to the Lord in His manifestations among the moving and nonmoving creatures, real eyes are those that see only the Lord, and actual limbs are those which regularly honor the water that has bathed the Lord's feet or those of His devotees.

COMMENTARY

The eyes which see the both the Deity form of Viṣṇu and His devotees, the head which bows to those two forms (*ubhaya-liṅgam*), and the limbs which receive the foot water of Viṣṇu and His devotees are fortunate. The word *aṅgāni*, "limbs" refers to those limbs which are above the navel, since pouring *caraṇāmṛta* on one's body lower than the navel is offensive.

|| 10.80.5 ||

sūta uvāca

viṣṇu-rātena sampṛṣṭo bhagavān bādarāyaṇiḥ

vāsudeve bhagavati nimagna-hṛdayo 'bravīt

TRANSLATION

Sūta Gosvāmī said: Thus questioned by King Viṣṇurāta, the powerful sage Bādarāyaṇi replied, his heart fully absorbed in meditation on the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vāsudeva.

|| 10.80.6 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

kṛṣṇasyāsīt sakhā kaścid brāhmaṇo brahma-vittamaḥ

virakta indriyārtheṣu praśāntātmā jitendriyaḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Lord Kṛṣṇa had a certain brāhmaṇa friend [named Sudāmā] who was most learned in Vedic knowledge and detached from all sense enjoyment. Furthermore, his mind was peaceful and his senses subdued.

|| 10.80.7 ||

yadṛcchayopapannena vartamāno gṛhāśramī

tasya bhāryā ku-cailasya kṣut-kṣāmā ca tathā-vidhā

TRANSLATION

Living as a householder, he maintained himself with whatever came of its own accord. The wife of that poorly dressed brāhmaṇa suffered along with him and was emaciated from hunger.

COMMENTARY

Sudama's wife exhibited the same qualities (*tathā-vidhā*) such as tolerating hunger (*kṣut-kṣāmā*). The word *ca* implies that she was even more tolerant than Sudāmā, because whatever she received as food she served to him, remaining hungry herself.

|| 10.80.8 ||

pati-vratā patiṁ prāha mlāyatā vadanena sā

daridraṁ sīdamānā vai vepamānābhigamya ca

TRANSLATION

The chaste wife of the poverty-stricken brāhmaṇa once approached him, her face dried up because of her distress. Trembling with fear, she spoke as follows.

COMMENTARY

She was distressed (*sīdamānā*) because she could not obtain any food for her husband. Out of fear of her husband she was also trembling (*vepamānā*), because she knew that he did not want to beg the Lord for anything other than devotion.

|| 10.80.9 ||

nanu brahman bhagavataḥ sakhā sākṣāc chriyaḥ patiḥ

brahmaṇyaś ca śaraṇyaś ca bhagavān sātvatarṣabhaḥ

TRANSLATION

[Sudāmā's wife said:] O brāhmaṇa, isn't it true that the husband of the goddess of fortune is the personal friend of your exalted self? That greatest of Yādavas, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, is compassionate to brāhmaṇas and very willing to grant them His shelter.

COMMENTARY

From her statements quoted here one can see that Sudāmā's wife anticipated every possible objection her husband might make to her request that he go to Kṛṣṇa to beg charity. If Sudāmā might say, "How could the husband of the goddess of fortune befriend a fallen soul like myself?" his wife replies by saying, "Śrī Kṛṣṇa is *brāhmaṇya*, very favorably disposed toward the *brāhmaṇas*."

Sudāmā**:** "But I do not have the qualities of such a *brāhmaṇa*.'''

Wife**:** "Kṛṣṇa gives shelter (*saraṇyaś*) to anyone who surrenders to Him."

Sudāmā**:** “Since I have no devotion, I do not even have the quality of surrender.”

Wife**:** “Kṛṣṇa is the omniscient Bhagavān, therefore, He will take note of your unhappiness and be merciful to you.”

Sudāmā**:** “Kṛṣṇa is equally disposed to all the countless unhappy conditioned souls suffering the fruits of their own *karma*, so why should He give wealth to me?

Wife**:** “Kṛṣṇa is the master (*ṛṣabhaḥ:patiḥ*) of the devotees (*sātvatas*). He may not give but the devotees who serve Him by fanning and other actions will mercifully give you some charity. Since Kṛṣṇa maintains the Yadus (*sātvatarṣabhaḥ*), what burden or fault is it for Him to maintain you?”

|| 10.80.10 ||

tam upaihi mahā-bhāga sādhūnāṁ ca parāyaṇam

dāsyati draviṇaṁ bhūri sīdate te kuṭumbine

TRANSLATION

O fortunate one, please approach Him, the real shelter of all saints. He will certainly give abundant wealth to such a suffering householder as you.

COMMENTARY

Sudāmā’s wife continued, “You may not consider yourself a *sādhu*, but you are definitely in a wretched condition. Seeing that you are struggling to support your family and worthy of charity, Kṛṣṇa will surely give generously.” The word *ca* following *sādhūnāṁ* implies that Kṛṣṇa is also the final shelter of those who are wretched.

|| 10.80.11 ||

āste ’dhunā dvāravatyāṁ bhoja-vṛṣṇy-andhakeśvaraḥ

smarataḥ pāda-kamalam ātmānam api yacchati

kiṁ nv artha-kāmān bhajato nāty-abhīṣṭān jagad-guruḥ

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa is now the ruler of the Bhojas, Vṛṣṇis and Andhakas and is staying at Dvārakā. Since He gives even His own self to anyone who simply remembers His lotus feet, what doubt is there that He, the spiritual master of the

universe, will bestow upon His sincere worshiper prosperity and material enjoyment, which are not even very desirable?

COMMENTARY

Sudāmā said, “But Kṛṣṇa may be in Indraprastha, Dvārakā or some other place killing the demons.”

His wife replied, “Kṛṣṇa has now put aside His weapons and does not leave His capital of Dvārakā. Since Kṛṣṇa is the ruler of the Bhojas, Vṛṣṇis and Andhakas, if these opulent rulers merely acknowledge you as a personal friend of Kṛṣṇa’s, they will give you everything you need.’’

Sudāmā**:** “But I am embarrassed to ask anything from Kṛṣṇa.”

Wife**:** “Kṛṣṇa gives Himself unto any person who just remembers (*smarataḥ*) Him even without asking for anything.” The genitive case *smarataḥ* stands for the dative case *smarate* (unto the person who remembers).

“What to speak of Kṛṣṇa giving material wealth and sense gratification to His devotee, which are not very much desirable (*nāty-abhīṣṭān*) for Him to give because in the long run they are tasteless. Moreover Kṛṣṇa is the benefactor of the universe (*jagad-guruḥ*), and thus He gives to those who entreat Him, even what they have not specifically begged for. Therefore, if you go to Dvārakā and just remain silent, Kṛṣṇa will give you the abundant wealth you desire. Since He is your true benefactor, He will also give you the sweetness of His lotus feet.”

|| 10.80.12-13 ||

sa evaṁ bhāryayā vipro bahuśaḥ prārthito muhuḥ

ayaṁ hi paramo lābha uttamaḥśloka-darśanam

iti sañcintya manasā gamanāya matiṁ dadhe

apy asty upāyanaṁ kiñcid gṛhe kalyāṇi dīyatām

TRANSLATION

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] When his wife thus repeatedly implored him in various ways, the brāhmaṇa thought to himself, “To see Lord Kṛṣṇa is indeed the greatest achievement in life.” Thus he decided to go, but first he

told her, “My good wife, if there is anything in the house I can bring as a gift, please give it to me.”

COMMENTARY

Due to his natural humility, Sudāmā was initially dissatisfied with his wife’s constant requests. Finally he pacified his mind and decided to go by thinking, “I will become very fortunate by seeing my Lord.”

(Text 13) Sudāmā asked, “If there is some gift in the house, please give it.” The idea is, “How can I go empty-handed to my friend’s house?”

|| 10.80.14 ||

yācitvā caturo muṣṭīn viprān pṛthuka-taṇḍulān

caila-khaṇḍena tān baddhvā bhartre prādād upāyanam

TRANSLATION

Sudāmā’s wife begged four handfuls of flat rice from neighboring brāhmaṇas, tied up the rice in a torn piece of cloth and gave it to her husband as a present for Lord Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.80.15 ||

sa tān ādāya viprāgryaḥ prayayau dvārakāṁ kila

kṛṣṇa-sandarśanaṁ mahyaṁ kathaṁ syād iti cintayan

TRANSLATION

Taking the flat rice, the saintly brāhmaṇa set off for Dvārakā, all the while wondering “How will I be able to have Kṛṣṇa’s audience?”

COMMENTARY

“Sudāmā thought, “How will I enter, since I will be stopped by the gatekeepers?”

|| 10.80.16-17 ||

trīṇi gulmāny atīyāya tisraḥ kakṣāś ca sa-dvijaḥ

vipro ’gamyāndhaka-vṛṣṇīnāṁ gṛheṣv acyuta-dharmiṇām

gṛhaṁ dvy-aṣṭa-sahasrāṇāṁ mahiṣīṇāṁ harer dvijaḥ

viveśaikatamaṁ śrīmad brahmānandaṁ gato yathā

TRANSLATION

The learned brāhmaṇa, joined by some local brāhmaṇas, passed three guard stations and went through three gateways, and then he walked by the homes of Lord Kṛṣṇa's faithful devotees, the Andhakas and Vṛṣṇis, which ordinarily no one could do. He then entered one of the opulent palaces belonging to Lord Hari's sixteen thousand queens, and when he did so he felt as if he were attaining the bliss of liberation.

COMMENTARY

Sudāmā passed through three encampments of soldiers (*gulmāni*) protecting the outer gates, and three tall tower houses at the inner gates (*kakṣās*) of the city. Accompanied by local *brāhmaṇas* (*sa- dvijaḥ*), Sudāmā passed near the houses of the unconquerable Vṛṣṇis and Andhakas. He entered the main palace among the palaces of Kṛṣṇa's sixteen thousand queens. It was the palace of Rukmiṇī according to the *Padma Purāṇa*, *Uttara-khaṇḍa*: *sa tu rukmiṇy-antaḥ-pura-dvāri kṣaṇaṁ tūṣṇūṁ sthitaḥ*, "He stood silently at the doorway of Queen Rukmiṇī's palace." Sudāmā momentarily forgot everything because he felt as if he had attained the bliss of liberation (*brahma-ānandam*).

|| 10.80.18 ||

taṁ vilokyācyuto dūrāt priyā-paryaṅkam āsthitaḥ

sahasotthāya cābhyetya dorbhyāṁ paryagrahīn mudā

TRANSLATION

At that time Lord Acyuta was seated on His consort's bed. Spotting the brāhmaṇa at some distance, the Lord immediately stood up, went forward to meet him and with great pleasure embraced him.

COMMENTARY

Seeing him, Kṛṣṇa got up and went forward (*abhyetya*) into the courtyard where He embraced (*paryagrahīt*) Sudāmā in great bliss.

|| 10.80.19 ||

sakhyuḥ priyasya viprarṣer aṅga-saṅgāti-nirvṛtaḥ

prīto vyamuñcad ab-bindūn netrābhyāṁ puṣkarekṣaṇaḥ

TRANSLATION

The lotus-eyed Supreme Lord felt intense ecstasy upon touching the body of His dear friend, the wise brāhmaṇa, and thus He shed tears of love.

|| 10.80.20-22 ||

athopaveśya paryaṅke svayam sakhyuḥ samarhaṇam

upahṛtyāvanijyāsya pādau pādāvanejanīḥ

agrahīc chirasā rājan bhagavāû loka-pāvanaḥ

vyalimpad divya-gandhena candanāguru-kuṅkamaiḥ

dhūpaiḥ surabhibhir mitraṁ pradīpāvalibhir mudā

arcitvāvedya tāmbūlaṁ gāṁ ca svāgatam abravīt

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa seated His friend Sudāmā upon the bed. Then the Lord, who purifies the whole world, personally offered him various tokens of respect and washed his feet, O King, after which He sprinkled the water on His own head. He anointed him with divinely fragrant sandalwood, aguru and kuṅkuma pastes and happily worshiped him with aromatic incense and arrays of lamps. After finally offering him betel nut and the gift of a cow, He welcomed him with pleasing words.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa sprinkled the water that He used to wash Sudāmā's feet (*pāda-avanejanīḥ*) on His head.

|| 10.80.23 ||

ku-cailaṁ malinaṁ kṣāmaṁ dvijaṁ dhamani-santatam

devī paryacarat sākṣāc cāmara-vyajanena vai

TRANSLATION

By fanning him with her cāmara, the divine goddess of fortune personally served that poor brāhmaṇa, whose clothing was torn and dirty and who was so thin that veins were visible all over his body.

COMMENTARY

Rukmiṇī personally (*devī sākṣāc*) fanned Sudāmā with a cāmara. In another version of the text the word *sākṣāc* is replaced by the word Śaibyā, which would mean that another queen [Śaibyā] fanned Sudāmā. But this does not agree with the *Padma Purāṇa*, Uttara-khaṇḍa.

|| 10.80.24 ||

antaḥ-pura-jano dṛṣṭvā kṛṣṇenāmala-kīrtinā

vismito 'bhūd ati-prītyā avadhūtaṁ sabhājitam

TRANSLATION

The people in the royal palace were astonished to see Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of spotless glory, so lovingly honor this shabbily dressed brāhmaṇa.

COMMENTARY

The word *amala-kīrtinā* (spotless fame) implies that henceforth Kṛṣṇa's fame, which personally attends Him, would assume the form of the glories of His having delivered Sudāmā from poverty. *Avadhūtaṁ* means "whose clothes were unclean."

|| 10.80.25-26 ||

kim anena kṛtaṁ puṇyam avadhūtena bhikṣuṇā

śriyā hīnena loke 'smin garhitenādhamena ca

yo 'sau tri-loka-guruṇā śrī-nivāsena sambhṛtaḥ

paryaṅka-sthāṁ śriyaṁ hitvā pariṣvakto 'gra-jo yathā

TRANSLATION

[The residents of the palace said:] What pious acts has this unkempt, impoverished brāhmaṇa performed? People regard him as lowly and contemptible, yet the spiritual master of the three worlds, the abode of Goddess Śrī, is serving him reverently. Leaving the goddess of fortune sitting on her bed, the Lord has embraced this brāhmaṇa as if he were an older brother.

COMMENTARY

These two verses describe the astonishment of the Dvārakāvāsīs. Sudāmā was lowly (*adhamena*) in the sense that he was dressed in shabby cloth.

|| 10.80.27 ||

kathayāṁ cakratur gāthāḥ pūrvā guru-kule satoḥ

ātmanor lalitā rājan karau gṛhya parasparam

TRANSLATION

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Taking each other's hands, O King, Kṛṣṇa and Sudāmā talked pleasantly about how they once lived together in the school of their guru.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa and Sudāmā talked about their school days while holding (*gṛhya*) hands with each other.

|| 10.80.28 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

api brahman guru-kulād bhavatā labdha-dakṣiṇāt

samāvṛttena dharma-jña bhāryoḍhā sadṛśī na vā

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord said: My dear brāhmaṇa, you know well the ways of dharma. After you offered the gift of remuneration to our guru and returned home from his school, did you marry a compatible wife or not?

COMMENTARY

Though Sudāmā was dressed as a householder, he did not appear to be enjoying any material pleasure. Therefore, Kṛṣṇa asked him if he was married or not.

Kṛṣṇa said, "You know well the religious principle (*dharma-jña*) that after graduating from school one should get married in order to prevent the fault of having no *āśrama*."

|| 10.80.29 ||

prāyo gṛheṣu te cittam akāma-vihitaṁ tathā

naivāti-prīyase vidvan dhaneṣu viditaṁ hi me

TRANSLATION

Even though you are mostly involved in household affairs, your mind is not affected by material desires. Nor, O learned one, do you take much pleasure in the pursuit of material wealth. This I am well aware of.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “Even though you are not speaking out of embarrass-ment, I know the actual situation.” Kṛṣṇa reveals this in this verse. “Sudāmā, though you are a householder, your heart is not disturbed by lust. O wise one (*vidvan*), I know that because you understand the temporary nature of material enjoyment, you have little attraction for wealth, clothing and other things. Therefore, these material things have not been given to you.”

The two words *prāyo* (for the most part) and *ati* (very much) imply that “for the sake of your wife you are displaying a favorable disposition toward material wealth.” This indicates that Kṛṣṇa will give these things later.

Kṛṣṇa said, “Just see! Though this man is a householder, he is without desires and does not want anything from others. Even if he is given some charity by force, still he will not accept it.”

At this time Kṛṣṇa thought, “To broadcast Sudāmā’s fame in Dvārakā, I will not reveal his desire to anyone, nor outwardly give any charity to him here.”

|| 10.80.30 ||

kecit kurvanti karmāṇi kāmair ahata-cetasaḥ

tyajantaḥ prakṛtīr daivīr yathāhaṁ loka-saṅgraham

TRANSLATION

Having renounced all material propensities, which spring from the Lord’s illusory energy, some people execute worldly duties with their minds undisturbed by mundane desires. They act as I do, to instruct the general populace.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “I know very well that you did not take *sannyāsa* like others, even though you are renounced. Those who are detached engage in work even though their minds are not attracted by material desires. By working in this way they give up the perverted propensity of the mind to create desires for material enjoyment. As a householder, I act according to the scriptural injunctions in order to teach the people in general.”

|| 10.80.31 ||

kaccid guru-kule vāsaṁ brahman smarasi nau yataḥ

dvijo vijñāya vijñeyaṁ tamasaḥ pāram aśnute

TRANSLATION

My dear brāhmaṇa, do you remember how we lived together in our spiritual master’s school? When a twice-born student has learned from his guru all that is to be learned, he can enjoy spiritual life, which lies beyond all ignorance.

COMMENTARY

In his mind, Sudāmā doubted, “Because Kṛṣṇa worships me in this way though I am so lowly, does He actually recognize who I am or not?” To dispel this doubt, Kṛṣṇa reminds Sudāmā of their school days together in twelve verses (31-43). Kṛṣṇa said, “Do you remember our living at the *gurukula*? By knowing (*vijñeyam*) the true nature of the Supreme Personality of Godhead a brāhmaṇa can transcend material existence (*tamasaḥ*)”

|| 10.80.32 ||

sa vai sat-karmaṇāṁ sākṣād dvijāter iha sambhavaḥ

ādyo ’ṅga yatrāśramiṇāṁ yathāhaṁ jñāna-do guruḥ

TRANSLATION

My dear friend, he who gives a person his physical birth is his first spiritual master, and he who initiates him as a twice-born brāhmaṇa and engages him in religious duties is indeed more directly his spiritual master. But the person who bestows transcendental know-ledge upon the members of all the spiritual orders of society is one’s ultimate spiritual master. Indeed, he is as good as My own self.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “In human life there are three *gurus*: one’s father, the one who gives *upanayanam*, and the one who teaches about Me. Of these the last is most worshipable. The father, who makes possible our birth (*sambhavaḥ*) in this world (*iha*), is the first *guru* (*ādyaḥ*). He who gives *upanayanam*, teaches Gāyatrī *mantra*, and engages one in sanctified activities (*sat-karmaṇāṁ*) is the second *guru*. But he who gives knowledge to the people in the four *āśramas*, and who teaches about Me is to be worshiped on the same level as Me (*yathāhaṁ:mat-tulyaḥ*).”

|| 10.80.33 ||

nanv artha-kovidā brahman varṇāśrama-vatām iha

ye mayā guruṇā vācā taranty añjo bhavārṇavam

TRANSLATION

Certainly, O brāhmaṇa, of all the followers of the varṇāśrama system, those who take advantage of the words I speak in My form as the spiritual master and thus easily cross over the ocean of material existence best understand their own true welfare.

COMMENTARY

In this verse Kṛṣṇa describes how the third guru delivers his student from the material world. Kṛṣṇa said, “Certainly (*nanu:niścitam eva*), among those following the *varṇāśrama* system, they who know the highest truth easily cross the ocean of material existence by hearing from a bonafide *guru* who teaches about Me and initiates them into My *mantra*. Such a *guru* is My very form (*mayā guruṇā*).”

|| 10.80.34 ||

nāham ijyā-prajātibhyāṁ tapasopaśamena vā

tuṣyeyaṁ sarva-bhūtātmā guru-śuśrūṣayā yathā

TRANSLATION

I, the Soul of all beings, am not as satisfied by ritual worship, brahminical initiation, penances or self-discipline as I am by faithful service rendered to one’s spiritual master.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “Therefore the *guru* who teaches about Me is most worthy of being faithfully served. Even though I am the Soul of all beings (*sarva-bhūtātmā*), I am not as satisfied by ritual worship, *brahminical* initiation, penances or self-discipline as I am by faithful service rendered to one’s spiritual master.”

|| 10.80.35-36 ||

api naḥ smaryate brahman vṛttaṁ nivasatāṁ gurau

guru-dāraiś coditānām indhanānayane kvacit

praviṣṭānāṁ mahāraṇyam apartau su-mahad dvija

vāta-varṣam abhūt tīvraṁ niṣṭhurāḥ stanayitnavaḥ

TRANSLATION

O brāhmaṇa, do you remember what happened to us while we were living with our spiritual master? Once our guru's wife sent us to fetch firewood, and after we entered the vast forest, O twice-born one, an unseasonal storm arose, with fierce wind and rain and harsh thunder.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, "Do you remember the incident that happened while we were living (*nivasatāṁ*) with our *guru*? It was winter and a great storm suddenly arose with wind, rain and thundering clouds although it was unseasonal (*apa-ṛtau*)."

|| 10.80.37 ||

sūryaś cāstaṁ gatas tāvat tamasā cāvṛtā diśaḥ

nimnaṁ kūlaṁ jala-mayaṁ na prājñāyata kiñcana

TRANSLATION

Then, as the sun set, the forest was covered by darkness in every direction, and with all the flooding we could not distinguish high land from low.

|| 10.80.38 ||

vayaṁ bhṛśam tatra mahānilāmbubhir nihanyamānā mahur ambu-samplave

diśo 'vidanto 'tha parasparaṁ vane gṛhīta-hastāḥ paribabhrimāturāḥ

TRANSLATION

Constantly besieged by the powerful wind and rain, we lost our way amidst the flooding waters. We simply held each other's hands and, in great distress, wandered aimlessly about the forest.

COMMENTARY

The verb *paribabhrima* may be understood to be the prefix *pari* with either the verb *bhṛ* or *bhram*. The word *bhram* indicates that Kṛṣṇa and Sudāmā wandered all about. The prefix *bhṛ*, which means “to carry,” indicates that while wandering about the two boys continued carrying the wood they had collected for their spiritual master.

|| 10.80.39 ||

etad viditvā udite ravau sāndīpanir guruḥ

anveṣamāṇo naḥ śiṣyān ācāryo ’paśyad āturān

TRANSLATION

Our guru, Sāndīpani, understanding our predicament, set out after sunrise to search for us, his disciples, and found us in distress.

|| 10.80.40 ||

aho he putrakā yūyam asmad-arthe ’ti-duḥkhitāḥ

ātmā vai prāṇināṁ preṣṭhas tam anādṛtya mat-parāḥ

TRANSLATION

[Sāndīpani said:] O my children, you have suffered so much for my sake! The body is most dear to every living creature, but you are so dedicated to me that you completely disregarded your own comfort.

COMMENTARY

Sāndīpanī Muni speaks three verses (40-42).

|| 10.80.41 ||

etad eva hi sac-chiṣyaiḥ kartavyaṁ guru-niṣkṛtam

yad vai viśuddha-bhāvena sarvārthātmārpaṇaṁ gurau

TRANSLATION

This indeed is the duty of all true disciples: to repay the debt to their spiritual master by offering him, with pure hearts, their wealth and even their very lives.

COMMENTARY

Sāndīpanī Muni said, "All true disciples (*sat śiṣyaiḥ*) should repay the debt to their *guru* by offering their body (*ātmā*), which the basis of the material conception of "I," and all their assets (*sarvārthā*), which is the basis of the conception of "mine."

|| 10.80.42 ||

tuṣṭo 'haṁ bho dvija-śreṣṭhāḥ satyāḥ santu manorathāḥ

chandāṁsy ayāta-yāmāni bhavantv iha paratra ca

TRANSLATION

You boys are first-class brāhmaṇas, and I am satisfied with you. May all your desires be fulfilled, and may the Vedic mantras you have learned never lose their meaning for you, in this world or the next.

COMMENTARY

Sāndīpanī Muni said, "Your knowledge of scriptures will remain ever fresh in your minds and never grow old (*ayāta-yāmāni*) in this life or the next." The *Amara-kośa* dictionary says, *jīrṇaṁ ca paribhuktaṁ ca yāta-yāmam idaṁ dvayam*: "*yāta-yāmām* means worn out or used up."

|| 10.80.43 ||

itthaṁ-vidhāny anekāni vasatāṁ guru-veśmani

guror anugraheṇaiva pumān pūrṇaḥ praśāntaye

TRANSLATION

[Lord Kṛṣṇa continued:] We had many similar experiences while living in our spiritual master's home. Simply by the grace of the spiritual master a person can fulfill life's purpose and attain eternal peace.

COMMENTARY

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said, "Many such incidents happened to us while living in *gurukula*."

|| 10.80.4 ||

śrī-brāhmaṇa uvāca

kim asmābhir anirvṛttaṁ deva-deva jagad-guro

bhavatā satya-kāmena yeṣāṁ vāso guror abhūt

TRANSLATION

The brāhmaṇa said: What could I possibly have failed to achieve, O Lord of lords, O universal teacher, since I was able to personally live with You, whose every desire is fulfilled, at the home of our spiritual master?

COMMENTARY

Sudāmā said, "What lack of bliss was there for us? It was completely blissful for us to live in the *gurukula* with You, whose every desire becomes fulfilled (*satya-kāmena*). Living in the *gurukula* was by Your wish alone. The difficulties of wind and rain we encountered while fetching wood were due to Your own desire, since You wanted to teach devotion to the spiritual master. Other than that, what power do the wind and rain have over You? The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (2.8) says: *bhīṣāsmād vātaḥ pavate*, 'The wind blows out of fear of You.' It was my great fortune to have lived there with You."

|| 10.80.45 ||

yasya cchando-mayaṁ brahma deha āvapanaṁ vibho

śreyasāṁ tasya guruṣu vāso 'tyanta-viḍambanam

TRANSLATION

O almighty Lord, Your body comprises the Absolute Truth in the form of the Vedas and is thus the source of all auspicious goals of life. That You took up residence at the school of a spiritual master is simply one of Your pastimes in which You play the role of a human being.

COMMENTARY

Sudāmā said, "Your body comprises the Absolute Truth in the form of the *Vedas*, and it is the source (*āvapanam:kṣetram*) of all auspicious goals. You lived in the gurukula only to teach others."

Thus ends the commentary on the Eightieth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

The Lord Blesses Sudāmā Brāhmaṇa

|| 10.81.1-2 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

sa itthaṁ dvija-mukhyena saha saṅkathayan hariḥ

sarva-bhūta-mano-’bhijñaḥ smayamāna uvāca tam

brahmaṇyo brāhmaṇaṁ kṛṣṇo bhagavān prahasan priyam

premṇā nirīkṣaṇenaiva prekṣan khalu satāṁ gatiḥ

TRANSLATION

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī said:] Lord Hari, Kṛṣṇa, perfectly knows the hearts of all living beings, and He is especially devoted to the brāhmaṇas. While the Supreme Lord, the goal of all saintly persons, conversed in this way with the best of the twice-born, He laughed and spoke the following words to that dear friend of His, the brāhmaṇa Sudāmā, all the while smiling and looking upon him with affection.

COMMENTARY

In this chapter Kṛṣṇa takes food from Sudāmā and, without Sudāmā’s knowledge, rewards him with unlimited treasure to repay His debt to him. The words *sarva-bhūta-mano-abhijña* indicate that since Kṛṣṇa knows the minds of everyone, He immediately knew that His friend Sudāmā had brought some flat rice for Him and was ashamed to present it. Kṛṣṇa smiled (*smayamāna*) at this moment, thinking “Yes, I am going to make you show what you brought for Me.” Kṛṣṇa’s smile then turned to laughter (*prahasan*) as He thought, “How long are you going to keep this precious gift hidden in your cloth?”

Kṛṣṇa looked at the bundle hidden under Sudāmā's garment. Then with His loving glance (*premṇā nirīkṣaṇena*) Kṛṣṇa conveyed, "The veins showing through your emaciated skin and your ragged clothes astonish everyone in Dvārakā. However, these symptoms of poverty will last only until tomorrow morning."

Although Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇo bhagavān*) is the supreme independent Lord, He happily reciprocates with those who are *priyam*, His cherished servants. Being devoted to the *brāhmaṇas* (*brahmaṇyaḥ*), Kṛṣṇa especially enjoys favoring them because they possess unconditional devotion to Him.

|| 10.81.3 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

kim upāyanam ānītaṁ brahman me bhavatā gṛhāt

aṇv apy upāhṛtaṁ bhaktaiḥ premṇā bhury eva me bhavet

bhūry apy abhaktopahṛtaṁ na me toṣāya kalpate

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord said: O brāhmaṇa, what gift have you brought Me from home? I regard as great even the smallest gift offered by My devotees in pure love, but even great offerings presented by nondevotees do not please Me.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa asked, "Have you brought anything for Me? I surmise that you, having such affection for Me, would not come empty-handed so far from your house to see Me, who have such affection for you."

Sudāmā replied, "I am very embarrassed to show it because it is meager."

Kṛṣṇa responded, "Even if My devotee offers only a little (*aṇu*) with pure love, it becomes plenty for Me."

|| 10.81.4 ||

patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ toyaṁ yo me bhaktyā prayacchati

tad ahaṁ bhakty-upahṛtam aśnāmi prayatātmanaḥ

TRANSLATION

If one offers Me with love and devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water, I will accept it.

COMMENTARY

Sudāmā said, “When I took this from my house to present to You, I did not think about it at all. But now I think that it is unsuitable for You to eat, so I am not giving it.”

The present verse, which Śrī Kṛṣṇa spoke in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.26) is Kṛṣṇa’s reply to Sudāmā’s anxiety that his bringing such an unfit offering was ill-considered. The phrases *bhaktyā prayacchati* and *bhakty-upahṛtam* may seem redundant, since they both mean “offered with devotion.” The word *bhaktyā* can indicate how Kṛṣṇa reciprocates the devotional mood of whoever offers Him something with love. In other words, Kṛṣṇa emphasizes here that His reciprocation in pure love is not dependent on the external quality of what is offered.

Kṛṣṇa said, “Something may or may not be tasty and pleasing in its own right. However, if My devotee offers it to Me in love with the expectation that I will enjoy it, I eat it with great pleasure without thinking twice about it.” The verb *aśnāmi*, “I eat,” implies that Kṛṣṇa eats even a flower, which though acceptable is not edible, bewildered as He is by the ecstatic love He feels for His devotee.

Someone might question, “Kṛṣṇa will You refuse an offering made to You by persons who are devotees of the demigods?” Kṛṣṇa answers, “Yes, I will refuse to eat it. I only eat from the hand of My devotee, who has a pure heart (*prayata-ātmanaḥ*) and whose mind is fixed in devotion. I accept his offering and no one else’s.”

|| 10.81.5 ||

ity ukto ’pi dviyas tasmai vrīḍitaḥ pataye śriyaḥ

pṛthuka-prasṛtiṁ rājan na prāyacchad avāṅ-mukhaḥ

TRANSLATION

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Even after being addressed in this way, O King, the brāhmaṇa felt too embarrassed to offer his palmfuls of flat rice to the husband of the goddess of fortune. He simply kept his head bowed in shame.

COMMENTARY

Sudāmā refused to give his four handfuls (*prasṛtiṁ*) of chipped rice to Kṛṣṇa due to embarrassment (*vrīḍitaḥ*). The phrase *pataye sriyaḥ* "husband of the goddess of fortune" indicates that Sudāmā was thinking, "How can the Lord of Śrī eat this hard, tasteless flat rice?"

By bowing his head Sudāmā revealed his meditation: "O Lord, do not mock me. Though You have requested me many times, I have decided that I will not give it to You." On the other side, Kṛṣṇa was thinking, "But you are My devotee so you should do as you decided to do when you left home and give it to Me."

|| 10.81.6-7 ||

sarva-bhūtātma-dṛk sākṣāt tasyāgamana-kāraṇam

vijñāyācintayan nāyaṁ śrī-kāmo mābhajat purā

patnyāḥ pati-vratāyās tu sakhā priya-cikīrṣayā

prāpto mām asya dāsyāmi sampado 'martya-durlabhāḥ

TRANSLATION

Being the direct witness in the hearts of all living beings, Lord Kṛṣṇa fully understood why Sudāmā had come to see Him. Thus He thought, "In the past My friend has never worshiped Me out of a desire for material opulence, but now he comes to Me to satisfy his chaste and devoted wife. I will give him riches that even the immortal demigods cannot obtain."

COMMENTARY

Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the direct witness in the hearts of all living beings (*sarva-bhūtātma-dṛk sākṣāt*) or the seer of all souls, overwhelmed with love, momentarily wondered, "Though I know everything, how has My devotee become so poor?" Then, quickly understanding the situation, Kṛṣṇa spoke to Himself the words related in this verse.

The result of performing *bhakti* without material desires is spiritual enjoyment. This point is explained in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (SB 1.2.9):

> *dharmasya hy āpavargyasya, nārtho arthāyopakalpate*
>
> *nārthasya dharmaikāntasya, kāmo lābhāya hi smṛtaḥ*
>
> "All occupational engagements are certainly meant for ultimate liberation. They should never be performed for material gain. Furthermore, according to sages, one who is engaged in the ultimate occupational service should never use material gain to cultivate sense gratification."

There are two types of renounced devotees (*niṣkāma bhaktas*): one kind is inimical to sense gratification, and the other is indifferent to it. According to the different natures of these *niṣkāma bhaktas*, there are two kinds of results. The devotee who is extremely averse to worldly enjoyments will not get such enjoyments from Kṛṣṇa. Jaḍa Bharata is an example of this type of renounced devotee. On the other hand, Kṛṣṇa may give limitless wealth and power to a devotee who is neither repelled nor attracted by material things, such as Prahlāda Mahārāja. Up to this point in his life, Sudāmā Brāhmaṇa was totally averse to sense gratification. But now, out of compassion for his faithful wife, and also because he hankered to see His dear friend Kṛṣṇa, he went to beg from the Lord.

Then again Kṛṣṇa thought to Himself. "Even the desire of Sudāmā's wife was motivated by loyalty to her husband (*pati-vratāyās*) alone. Thus she is also without personal desire at all. Therefore I will give them riches that even the immortal demigods cannot obtain."

|| 10.81.8 ||

itthaṁ vicintya vasanāc cīra-baddhān dvi-janmanaḥ

svayaṁ jahāra kim idam iti pṛthuka-taṇḍulān

TRANSLATION

Thinking like this, the Lord snatched from the brāhmaṇa's garment the grains of flat rice tied up in an old piece of cloth and exclaimed, "What is this?"

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa snatched the flat rice which Sudāmā had hidden in a strip of old cloth tied around his waist.

|| 10.81.9 ||

nanv etad upanītaṁ me parama-prīṇanaṁ sakhe

tarpayanty aṅga māṁ viśvam ete pṛthuka-taṇḍulāḥ

TRANSLATION

"My friend, have You brought this for Me? It gives Me extreme pleasure. Indeed, these few grains of flat rice will satisfy not only Me but also the entire universe."

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said. “Do not think that this flat rice is unsuitable for Me because it is stale and tasteless. I like it very much. Moreover do not think it is not enough, for it will satisfy not only Me but the entire universe.”

|| 10.81.10 ||

iti muṣṭiṁ sakṛj jagdhvā dvitīyāṁ jagdhum ādade

tāvac chrīr jagṛhe hastaṁ tat-parā parameṣṭhinaḥ

TRANSLATION

After saying this, the Supreme Lord ate one palmful and was about to eat a second when the devoted goddess Rukmiṇī took hold of His hand.

COMMENTARY

By grabbing Kṛṣṇa’s hand, Rukmiṇī implied, “If You eat all of this wonderful treat Your friend brought from his house, what will remain for my friends, co-wives, sisters-in-law, servants and myself? There will not be enough left to distribute even one grain to each of us. Even if I distribute one particle of rice to each person, it will not be sufficient.”

This was Rukmiṇī’s indication for Sudāmā. To her personal maidservants Rukmiṇī said by her gesture, “This hard rice will upset my Lord’s tender stomach.”

|| 10.81.11 ||

etāvatālaṁ viśvātman sarva-sampat-samṛddhaye

asmin loke ’tha vāmuṣmin puṁsas tvat-toṣa-kāraṇam

TRANSLATION

[Queen Rukmiṇī said:] This is more than enough, O Soul of the universe, to secure him an abundance of all kinds of wealth in this world and the next. After all, one’s prosperity depends simply on Your satisfaction.

COMMENTARY

Through her eyes Rukmiṇī conveyed her intentions to Kṛṣṇa: “You have eaten enough (*etāvatālaṁ*), so be satisfied with that and do not eat any more. O Soul of the universe (*visva-ātman*)! If You are satisfied, the whole universe will be satisfied.”

Kṛṣṇa spoke through His eyes, “In order to give My dear friend great wealth, I must eat more than one handful.”

Rukmiṇī replied, “Your satisfaction alone is the cause of one’s increasing his wealth in this life and the next. Therefore You need not chew much of this hard, tasteless rice.” Rukmiṇī’s statement was communicated internally. It was not spoken externally, because if it were then Sudāmā would understand her words and not speak verse twenty.

|| 10.81.12 ||

brāhmaṇas tāṁ tu rajanīm uṣitvācyuta-mandire

bhuktvā pītvā sukhaṁ mene ātmānaṁ svar-gataṁ yathā

TRANSLATION

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] The brāhmaṇa spent that night in Lord Acyuta’s palace after eating and drinking to his full satisfaction. He felt as if he had gone to the spiritual world.

COMMENTARY

Eating and drinking sufficiently, Sudāmā felt as if he had attained the heavenly planets (*svar-gataṁ*).

|| 10.81.13 ||

śvo-bhūte viśva-bhāvena sva-sukhenābhivanditaḥ

jagāma svālayaṁ tāta pathy anavrajya nanditaḥ

TRANSLATION

The next day, Sudāmā set off for home while being honored by Lord Kṛṣṇa, the self-satisfied maintainer of the universe. The brāhmaṇa felt greatly delighted, my dear King, as he walked along the road.

COMMENTARY

The word *abhivanditaḥ*, “honored” means that Śrī Kṛṣṇa honored or respected Sudāmā by accompanying him on the road for a short distance. Kṛṣṇa is perfectly complete in His own bliss (*sva-sukhena*) and He is the maintainer of the universe (*visva-bhāvena*). Therefore, since Kṛṣṇa can create the whole universe by His mere wish, what endeavor is it for Him to create a luxurious palace for Sudāmā? Kṛṣṇa abounds in bliss, so how difficult is it for Him to fill the heart of Sudāmā with unlimited joy (*nanditaḥ*)?

|| 10.81.14 ||

sa cālabdhvā dhanaṁ kṛṣṇān na tu yācitavān svayam

sva-gṛhān vrīḍito 'gacchan mahad-darśana-nirvṛtaḥ

TRANSLATION

Although he had apparently received no wealth from Lord Kṛṣṇa, Sudāmā was too shy to beg for it on his own. He simply returned home, feeling perfectly satisfied to have had the Supreme Lord's audience.

|| 10.81.15 ||

aho brahmaṇya-devasya dṛṣṭā brahmaṇyatā mayā

yad daridratamo lakṣmīm āśliṣṭo bibhratorasi

TRANSLATION

[Sudāmā thought:] Lord Kṛṣṇa is known to be devoted to the brāhmaṇas, and now I have personally seen this devotion. Indeed, He who carries the goddess of fortune on His chest has embraced the poorest beggar.

COMMENTARY

Sudāmā expresses his bliss in four verses (15-18). Sudāmā said, "I have directly seen Kṛṣṇa's affection for the *brāhmaṇas* because He embraced me to His chest, the residence place of Lakṣmī-devī."

|| 10.81.16 ||

kvāhaṁ daridraḥ pāpīyān kva kṛṣṇaḥ śrī-niketanaḥ

brahma-bandhur iti smāhaṁ bāhubhyāṁ parirambhitaḥ

TRANSLATION

Who am I? A sinful, poor friend of a brāhmaṇa. And who is Kṛṣṇa? The Supreme Personality of Godhead, full in six opulences. Nonetheless, He has embraced me with His two arms.

COMMENTARY

Sudāmā said, “Though I am so fallen that I am not even fit to be called a *brāhmaṇa* (*brahma-bandhuḥ*), I was embraced by Kṛṣṇa’s arms.

|| 10.81.17 ||

nivāsitaḥ priyā-juṣṭe paryaṅke bhrātaro yathā

mahiṣyā vījitaḥ śrānto bāla-vyajana-hastayā

TRANSLATION

He treated me just like one of His brothers, making me sit on the bed of His beloved consort. And because I was fatigued, His queen personally fanned me with a yak-tail cāmara.

|| 10.81.18 ||

śuśrūṣayā paramayā pāda-saṁvāhanādibhiḥ

pūjito deva-devena vipra-devena deva-vat

TRANSLATION

Although He is the Lord of all demigods and the object of worship for all brāhmaṇas, He worshiped me as if I were a demigod myself, massaging my feet and rendering other humble services.

|| 10.81.19 ||

svargāpavargayoḥ puṁsāṁ rasāyāṁ bhuvi sampadām

sarvāsām api siddhīnāṁ mūlaṁ tac-caraṇārcanam

TRANSLATION

Devotional service to His lotus feet is the root cause of all the perfections a person can find in heaven, in liberation, in the subterranean regions and on earth.

|| 10.81.20 ||

adhano ’yaṁ dhanaṁ prāpya mādyann uccair na māṁ smaret

iti kāruṇiko nūnaṁ dhanaṁ me ’bhūri nādadāt

TRANSLATION

Thinking "If this poor wretch suddenly becomes rich, he will forget Me in his intoxicating happiness," the compassionate Lord did not grant me even a little wealth.

COMMENTARY

Sudāmā's statement that Kṛṣṇa gave him "not even a little wealth" (*dhanaṁ me abhūri nādadāt*) may also be taken to mean "That Kṛṣṇa did not give me anything is my great wealth (*ādadāt bhuri me dhanam*). Or it can mean that instead of giving Sudāmā wealth that was *abhūri*, "slight," Kṛṣṇa in fact gave him the immense treasure of His association.

|| 10.81.21-23 ||

iti tac cintayann antaḥ prāpto niya-gṛhāntikam

sūryānalendu-saṅkāśair vimānaiḥ sarvato vṛtam

vicitropavanodyānaiḥ kūjad-dvija-kulākulaiḥ

protphulla-kamudāmbhoja-kahlārotpala-vāribhiḥ

juṣṭaṁ sv-alaṅkṛtaiḥ pumbhiḥ strībhiś ca hariṇākṣibhiḥ

kim idaṁ kasya vā sthānaṁ kathaṁ tad idam ity abhūt

TRANSLATION

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Thinking thus to himself, Sudāmā finally came to the place where his home stood. But that place was now crowded on all sides with towering, celestial palaces rivaling the combined brilliance of the sun, fire and the moon. There were splendorous courtyards and gardens, each filled with flocks of cooing birds and beautified by ponds in which kumuda, ambhoja, kahlāra and utpala lotuses grew. Finely attired men and doe-eyed women stood in attendance. Sudāmā wondered, "What is all this? Whose property is it? How has this all come about?"

COMMENTARY

As Sudāmā approached his own house, he saw the effulgence of the place and thought, "What is this?" Seeing the palatial towers, he said, "Whose place is this?" Finally recognizing it as own house he wondered, "How did this happen?"

|| 10.81.24 ||

evaṁ mīmāṁsamānaṁ taṁ narā nāryo ’mara-prabhāḥ

pratyagṛhṇan mahā-bhāgaṁ gīta-vādyena bhūyasā

TRANSLATION

As he continued to ponder in this way, the beautiful men—and maidservants, as effulgent as demigods, came forward to greet their greatly fortunate master with loud song and instrumental music.

COMMENTARY

The word *pratyagṛhṇan*, “the servants acknowledged in turn” indicates that first Sudāmā accepted the servants within his mind, deciding, “My Lord must want me to have them.” Noticing the change in Sudāmā’s attitude, the servants then approached him as their master.

|| 10.81.25 ||

patim āgatam ākarṇya patny uddharṣāti-sambhramā

niścakrāma gṛhāt tūrṇaṁ rūpiṇī śrīr ivālayāt

TRANSLATION

When she heard that her husband had arrived, the brāhmaṇa ‘s wife quickly came out of the house in a jubilant flurry. She resembled the goddess of fortune herself emerging from her divine abode.

COMMENTARY

The night before, Sudāmā’s wife went to sleep with a wasted body, withered breasts and worn out clothes in a house with broken walls and a crumbling roof. When she woke in the morning, however, she found herself and her house wonderfully changed. She was astonished for a moment, and then concluded that all this wealth had been given to Sudāmā by Lord Kṛṣṇa. Then she went out to greet her husband.

|| 10.81.26 ||

pati-vratā patiṁ dṛṣṭvā premotkaṇṭhāśru-locanā

mīlitākṣy anamad buddhyā manasā pariṣasvaje

TRANSLATION

When the chaste lady saw her husband, her eyes filled with tears of love and eagerness. As she held her eyes closed, she solemnly bowed down to him, and in her heart she embraced him.

|| 10.81.27 ||

patnīṁ vīkṣya visphurantīṁ devīṁ vaimānikīm iva

dāsīnāṁ niṣka-kaṇṭhīnāṁ madhye bhāntīṁ sa vismitaḥ

TRANSLATION

Sudāmā was amazed to see his wife. Shining forth in the midst of maidservants adorned with jeweled lockets, she looked as effulgent as a demigoddess in her celestial airplane.

COMMENTARY

Sudāmā still had his old cloth and protruding veins. Kṛṣṇa kept him in his wretched state so that his wife would recognize him.

|| 10.81.28 ||

prītaḥ svayaṁ tayā yuktaḥ praviṣṭo nija-mandiram

maṇi-stambha-śatopetaṁ mahendra-bhavanaṁ yathā

TRANSLATION

With pleasure he took his wife with him and entered his house, where there were hundreds of gem-studded pillars, just as in the palace of Lord Mahendra.

COMMENTARY

Sudāmā was simply astonished at the sight of his wife. As he wondered, “Who is this demigod’s wife approaching such a fallen soul as me?” the maidservants informed him, “This is indeed your wife.” Immediately Sudāmā’s body became young and beautiful, bedecked in fine clothing and jewelry. The word *prītaḥ* here indicates that these changes gave Sudāmā considerable pleasure. Sudāmā and his wife then entered the house which rivaled Indra’s celestial abode in opulence.

The *Viṣṇu-sahasrāṇām*, "Thousand Names of Viṣṇu" contained in the *Mahābhārata*, describes Kṛṣṇa as the one who brought the treasure of Indra to earth for His devotee beggar Śridāmā (*sridāmā-raṅka-bhaktārtha-bhūmy-ānītendra-vaibhavaḥ*).

|| 10.81.29-32 ||

payaḥ-phena-nibhāḥ śayyā dāntā rukma-paricchadāḥ

paryaṅkā hema-daṇḍāni cāmara-vyajanāni ca

āsanāni ca haimāni mṛdūpastaraṇāni ca

muktādāma-vilambīni vitānāni dyumanti ca

svaccha-sphaṭika-kuḍyeṣu mahā-mārakateṣu ca

ratna-dīpān bhrājamānān lalanā ratna-saṁyutāḥ

vilokya brāhmaṇas tatra samṛddhīḥ sarva-sampadām

tarkayām āsa nirvyagraḥ sva-samṛddhim ahaitukīm

TRANSLATION

In Sudāmā's home were beds as soft and white as the foam of milk, with bedsteads made of ivory and ornamented with gold. There were also couches with golden legs, as well as royal cāmara fans, golden thrones, soft cushions and gleaming canopies hung with strings of pearls. Upon the walls of sparkling crystal glass, inlaid with precious emeralds, shone jeweled lamps, and the women in the palace were all adorned with precious gems. As he viewed this luxurious opulence of all varieties, the brāhmaṇa calmly reasoned to himself about his unexpected prosperity.

COMMENTARY

Sudāmā reflected upon the sudden (*ahaitukīm*) increase in his fortune.

|| 10.81.33 ||

nūnaṁ bataitan mama durbhagasya śaśvad daridrasya samṛddhi-hetuḥ

mahā-vibhūter avalokato 'nyo naivopapadyeta yadūttamasya

TRANSLATION

[Sudāmā thought:] I have always been poor. Certainly the only possible way that such an unfortunate person as myself could become suddenly rich is that

Lord Kṛṣṇa, the supremely opulent chief of the Yadu dynasty, has glanced upon Me.

COMMENTARY

Sudāmā thought, “The great opulence of me and this house has happened only by the glance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.”

|| 10.81.34 ||

nanv abruvāṇo diśate samakṣaṁ yāciṣṇave bhūry api bhūri-bhojaḥ

parjanya-vat tat svayam īkṣamāṇo dāśārhakāṇām ṛṣabhaḥ sakhā me

TRANSLATION

After all, my friend Kṛṣṇa, the most exalted of the Dāśārhas and the enjoyer of unlimited wealth, noticed that I secretly intended to beg from Him. Thus even though He said nothing about it when I stood before Him, He actually bestowed upon me the most abundant riches. In this way He acted just like a merciful rain cloud.

COMMENTARY

Sudāmā thought, “If Kṛṣṇa has bestowed this wealth upon me, then why did He not tell me about it when we met in Dvārakā? Certainly my friend directly speaks and gives abundant wealth to beggars like myself. I surmise that Kṛṣṇa did not mention how He was going to fulfill my unspoken request because at that time He was thinking, ‘My dear friend has given Me these grains of rice, which are greater than all the treasures I own. Even though in his own house he had no such gift to bring Me, he took the trouble of begging it from a neighbor. Therefore it is only proper that I give him something more valuable than all My possessions. But nothing is equal to or greater than what I possess, so all I can do is give him such meager things as the treasures of Indra, Brahmā and other demigods.’”

Embarrassed at being unable to properly reciprocate Sudāmā’s offering, Śrī Kṛṣṇa bestowed His favor on him silently. Kṛṣṇa acted just like a magnanimous rain cloud which provides the necessities of life for everyone near and far but feels ashamed that its rain is too insignificant a gift to give in return for the abundant offerings that farmers make to it. Out of shame the cloud may wait until nighttime when the farmers are asleep before watering their fields. This is the position of Kṛṣṇa, the best of the generous dynasty of Yadus (*dāsārhakāṇām ṛṣabhaḥ*).

|| 10.81.35 ||

kiñcit karoty urv api yat sva-dattaṁ suhṛt-kṛtaṁ phalgv api bhūri-kārī

mayopaṇītaṁ pṛthukaika-muṣṭiṁ pratyagrahīt prīti-yuto mahātmā

TRANSLATION

The Lord considers even His greatest benedictions to be insigni-ficant, while He magnifies even a small service rendered to Him by His well-wishing devotee. Thus with pleasure the Supreme Soul accepted a single palmful of the flat rice I brought Him.

COMMENTARY

Sudāmā thought, "Kṛṣṇa thought that what He was giving me, though great (*uru*), was small, and that what I was giving, though insignificant (*phalgu*), was great. For that reason He accepted the rice offered by me with devotion."

|| 10.81.36 ||

tasyaiva me sauhṛda-sakhya-maitrī-dāsyaṁ punar janmani janmani syāt

mahānubhāvena guṇālayena viṣajjatas tat-puruṣa-prasaṅgaḥ

TRANSLATION

The Lord is the supremely compassionate reservoir of all transcendental qualities. Life after life may I serve Him with love, friendship and sympathy, and may I cultivate such firm attachment for Him by the precious association of His devotees.

COMMENTARY

Sudāmā thought, "May I have affection (*sauhṛdam:sneha*) toward Kṛṣṇa who is so compassionate to His devotees." The word *sakhyam* means affinity manifested in the desire to live in Kṛṣṇa's association. *Maitrī* means the attitude of intimate comradeship, and *dāsyam* means the urge to do service.

|| 10.81.37 ||

bhaktāya citrā bhagavān hi sampado rājyaṁ vibhūtīr na samarthayaty ajaḥ

adīrgha-bodhāya vicakṣaṇaḥ svayaṁ paśyan nipātaṁ dhanināṁ madodbhavam

TRANSLATION

To a devotee who lacks spiritual insight, the Supreme Lord will not grant the wonderful opulences of this world-kingly power and material assets. Indeed, in

His infinite wisdom the unborn Lord well knows how the intoxication of pride can cause the downfall of the wealthy.

COMMENTARY

Someone might ask, “So you have devotion and the result of that devotion is gaining wealth?” In this verse Sudāmā replies by saying, “No, I do not have *bhakti*, and attaining material wealth is not the result of *bhakti*.”

Sudāmā thought, “A great saint like Prahlāda Mahārāja can avoid becoming contaminated by immeasurable wealth, power and fame, but I must always be wary of temptation in my new situation.” After obtaining wealth, Sudāmā thought, “What is the use of it?”

Although surrounded by material opulence, Sudāmā only enjoyed what was necessary to maintain himself. Fixed in his vows, Sudāmā continued sleeping on the earth. He became completely absorbed in hearing and chanting about Kṛṣṇa and rendering other forms of devotional service. Kṛṣṇa does not give as much material wealth as a neophyte devotee may desire, but only what will promote his spiritual advancement. However some say that Kṛṣṇa will give unlimited wealth to assist the devotional service of His *premi-bhaktas*, loving devotees.

|| 10.81.38 ||

itthaṁ vyavasito buddhyā bhakto ’tīva janārdane

viṣayān jāyayā tyakṣyan bubhuje nāti-lampaṭaḥ

TRANSLATION

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Thus firmly fixing his determination by means of his spiritual intelligence, Sudāmā remained absolutely devoted to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the shelter of all living beings. Free from avarice, he enjoyed, together with his wife, the sense pleasures that had been bestowed upon him, always with the idea of eventually renouncing all sense gratification.

|| 10.81.39 ||

tasya vai deva-devasya harer yajña-pateḥ prabhoḥ

brāhmaṇāḥ prabhavo daivaṁ na tebhyo vidyate param

TRANSLATION

Lord Hari is the God of all gods, the master of all sacrifices, and the supreme ruler. But He accepts the saintly brāhmaṇas as His masters, and so there exists no deity higher than them.

COMMENTARY

Though Kṛṣṇa is affectionate to His devotees, He is famous for being affectionate to the *brāhmaṇas*. Kṛṣṇa is the supreme master (*prabhoḥ*) of everyone, yet He accepts the *brāhmaṇas* as His masters (*prabhavaḥ*). Even though Kṛṣṇa is the God of all gods (*deva-devasya*), the *brāhmaṇas* are His deities. Kṛṣṇa is the master of all sacrifices (*yajña-pateḥ*), but He happily worships the *brāhmaṇas*.

|| 10.81.40 ||

evaṁ sa vipro bhagavat-suhṛt tadā dṛṣṭvā sva-bhṛtyair ajitaṁ parājitam

tad-dhyāna-vegodgrathitātma-bandhanas tad-dhāma lebhe ʼciratataḥ satāṁ gatim

TRANSLATION

Thus seeing how the unconquerable Supreme Lord is nonetheless conquered by His own servants, the Lord's dear brāhmaṇa friend felt the remaining knots of material attachment within his heart being cut by the force of his constant meditation on the Lord. In a short time he attained Lord Kṛṣṇa's supreme abode, the destination of great saints.

COMMENTARY

This verse shows how Sudāmā got free from material attachment and attained the wealth of Kṛṣṇa's abode. Seeing that the unconquerable Lord is conquered by His servants, Sudāmā returned to his previous nature and meditated on Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.81.41 ||

etad brahmaṇya-devasya śrutvā brahmaṇyatāṁ naraḥ

labdha-bhāvo bhagavati karma-bandhād vimucyate

TRANSLATION

The Lord always shows brāhmaṇas special favor. Anyone who hears this account of the Supreme Lord's kindness to brāhmaṇas will come to develop love for the Lord and thus become freed from the bondage of material work.

Thus ends the commentary on the Eighty-first Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Eighty-two

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma Meet the Inhabitants of Vṛndāvana

|| 10.82.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

athaikadā dvāravatyāṁ vasato rāma-kṛṣṇayoḥ

sūryoparāgaḥ su-mahān āsīt kalpa-kṣaye yathā

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Once, while Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa were living in Dvārakā, there occurred a great eclipse of the sun, just as if the end of Lord Brahmā's day had come.

COMMENTARY

In this chapter there is a meeting of friends at Kurukṣetra during a solar eclipse, and Kṛṣṇa immerses the Vrajavāsīs in an ocean of prema.

The words *atha* (then) and *ekadā* (on one occasion) are commonly used in Sanskrit literature to introduce a new topic. Here they especially indicate that the reunion of the Yadus and Vṛṣṇis at Kurukṣetra is being narrated out of chronological sequence. Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī explains in his *Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī* commentary that the events of this chapter occur after Balarāma's visit to Vraja (Chapter 65) and before Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira's Rājasūya sacrifice (Chapter 74). This must be so because at Kurukṣetra, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Vidura, Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīṣma and Droṇa were still on friendly terms and happy to see Kṛṣṇa. At the Rājasūya-yajña, on the other hand, Duryodhana became

extremely jealous of the Pāṇḍavas and afterwards challenged them to a gambling match. By cheating, Duryodhana exiled the Pāṇḍavas to the forest.

According to the Vana Parva of the *Mahābhārata*, Śālva and Dantavakra were also killed at this time. As soon as the Pāṇḍavas returned from exile the Battle of Kurukṣetra took place, during which Bhīṣma and Droṇa were killed. Therefore, it is not logically possible for the solar eclipse at Kurukṣetra to have happened after the Rājasūya sacrifice.

|| 10.82.2 ||

taṁ jñātvā manujā rājan purastād eva sarvataḥ

samanta-pañcakaṁ kṣetraṁ yayuḥ śreyo-vidhitsayā

TRANSLATION

Knowing of this eclipse in advance, O King, many people went to the holy place known as Samanta-pañcaka in order to earn pious credit.

COMMENTARY

They went to Kurukṣetra (*samanta-pañcakam kṣetraṁ*) because they had heard that one gains pious merit by being there at the time of a solar eclipse.

|| 10.82.3-6 ||

niḥkṣatriyāṁ mahīṁ kurvan rāmaḥ śastra-bhṛtāṁ varaḥ

nṛpāṇāṁ rudhiraugheṇa yatra cakre mahā-hradān

īje ca bhagavān rāmo yatrāspṛṣṭo 'pi karmaṇā

lokaṁ saṅgrāhayann īśo yathānyo 'ghāpanuttaye

mahatyāṁ tīrtha-yātrāyāṁ tatrāgan bhāratīḥ prajāḥ

vṛṣṇayaś ca tathākrūra-vasudevāhukādayaḥ

yayur bhārata tat kṣetraṁ svam aghaṁ kṣapayiṣṇavaḥ

gada-pradyumna-sāmbādyāḥ sucandra-śuka-sāraṇaiḥ

āste 'niruddho rakṣāyāṁ kṛtavarmā ca yūtha-paḥ

TRANSLATION

After ridding the earth of kings, Lord Paraśurāma, the foremost of warriors, created huge lakes from the kings' blood at Samantaka-pañcaka. Although he is never tainted by karmic reactions, Lord Paraśurāma performed sacrifices there to instruct people in general; thus he acted like an ordinary person trying to free himself of sins. From all parts of Bhārata-varṣa a great number of people now came to that Samanta-pañcaka on pilgrimage. O descendant of Bharata, among those arriving at the holy place were many Vṛṣṇis, such as Gada, Pradyumna and Sāmba, hoping to be relieved of their sins; Akrūra, Vāsudeva, Āhuka and other kings also went there. Aniruddha remained in Dvārakā with Sucandra, Śuka and Sāraṇa to guard the city, together with Kṛtavarmā, the commander of their armed forces.

COMMENTARY

(Text 3) This verse indicates the great deeds of Paraśurāma at Samanta-pañcaka, which rids one of sin. People came there from all parts of Bhārata-varṣa. Kṛṣṇa's grandson Aniruddha remained in Dvārakā to protect the city because He is Lord Viṣṇu's original manifestation as the guardian of the spiritual planet Svetadvīpa.

|| 10.82.7-8 ||

te rathair deva-dhiṣṇyābhair hayaiś ca tarala-plavaiḥ

gajair nadadbhir abhrābhair nṛbhir vidyādhara-dyubhiḥ

vyarocanta mahā-tejāḥ pathi kāñcana-mālinaḥ

divya-srag-vastra-sannāhāḥ kalatraiḥ khe-carā iva

TRANSLATION

The mighty Yādavas passed with great majesty along the road. They were attended by their soldiers, who rode on chariots rivaling the airplanes of heaven, on horses moving with a rhythmic gait, and on bellowing elephants as huge as clouds. Also with them were many infantrymen as effulgent as celestial Vidyādharas. The Yādavas were so divinely dressed—being adorned with gold necklaces and flower garlands and wearing fine armor—that as they proceeded along the road with their wives they seemed to be demigods flying through the sky.

COMMENTARY

Shining like the airplanes of the demigods (*deva dhiṣṇya*), the Yādavas' chariots appeared very effulgent (*mahā-tejāḥ*) while moving in procession.

|| 10.82.9 ||

tatra snātvā mahā-bhāgā upoṣya su-samāhitāḥ

brāhmaṇebhyo dadur dhenūr vāsaḥ-srag-rukma-mālinīḥ

TRANSLATION

At Samanta-pañcaka, the saintly Yādavas bathed and then observed a fast with careful attention. Afterward they presented brāhmaṇas with cows bedecked with garments, flower garlands and gold necklaces.

|| 10.82.10 ||

rāma-hradeṣu vidhi-vat punar āplutya vṛṣṇayaḥ

dadaḥ sv-annaṁ dvijāgryebhyaḥ kṛṣṇe no bhaktir astv iti

TRANSLATION

In accordance with scriptural injunctions, the descendants of Vṛṣṇi then bathed once more in Lord Paraśurāma's lakes and fed first-class brāhmaṇas with sumptuous food. All the while they prayed, "May we be granted devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa."

COMMENTARY

After the eclipse was over, they bathed again (*punar āplutya*) on the following day to complete their fast.

|| 10.82.11 ||

svayaṁ ca tad-anujñātā vṛṣṇayaḥ kṛṣṇa-devatāḥ

bhuktvopaviviśuḥ kāmaṁ snigdha-cchāyāṅghripāṅghriṣu

TRANSLATION

Then, with the permission of Lord Kṛṣṇa, their sole object of worship, the Vṛṣṇis ate breakfast and sat down at their leisure beneath trees that gave cooling shade.

COMMENTARY

They sat down comfortably in the cooling (*snigdhā:sītalā*) shade under the trees.

|| 10.82.12-13 ||

tatrāgatāṁs te dadṛśuḥ suhṛt-sambandhino nṛpān

matsyośīnara-kauśalya-vidarbha-kuru-sṛñjayān

kāmboja-kaikayān madrān kuntīn ānarta-keralān

anyāṁś caivātma-pakṣīyān parāṁś ca śataśo nṛpa

nandādīn suhṛdo gopān gopīś cotkaṇṭhitāś ciram

TRANSLATION

The Yādavas saw that many of the kings who had arrived were old friends and relatives—the Matsyas, Uśīnaras, Kauśalyas, Vidarbhas, Kurus, Sṛñjayas, Kāmbojas, Kaikayas, Madras, Kuntīs and the kings of Ānarta and Kerala. They also saw many hundreds of other kings, both allies and adversaries. In addition, my dear King Parīkṣit, they saw their dear friends Nanda Mahārāja and the cowherd men and women, who had been suffering in anxiety for so long.

|| 10.82.14 ||

anyonya-sandarśana-harṣa-raṁhasā protphulla-hṛd-vaktra-saroruha-śriyaḥ

āśliṣya gāḍhaṁ nayanaiḥ sravaj-jalā hṛṣyat-tvaco ruddha-giro yayur mudam

TRANSLATION

As the great joy of seeing one another made the lotuses of their hearts and faces bloom with fresh beauty, the men embraced one another enthusiastically. With tears pouring from their eyes, the hair on their bodies standing on end and their voices choked up, they all felt intense bliss.

|| 10.82.15 ||

striyaś ca saṁvīkṣya mitho 'ti-sauhṛda-smitāmalāpāṅga-dṛśo 'bhirebhire

stanaiḥ stanān kuṅkuma-paṅka-rūṣitān nihatya dorbhiḥ praṇayāśru-locanāḥ

TRANSLATION

The women glanced at one another with pure smiles of loving friendship. And when they embraced, their breasts, smeared with saffron paste, pressed against one another as their eyes filled with tears of affection.

|| 10.82.16 ||

tato ’bhivādya te vṛddhān yaviṣṭhair abhivāditāḥ

sv-āgataṁ kuśalaṁ pṛṣṭvā cakruḥ kṛṣṇa-kathā mithaḥ

TRANSLATION

They all then offered obeisances to their elders and received respect in turn from their younger relatives. After inquiring from one another about the comfort of their trip and their well-being, they proceeded to talk about Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.82.17 ||

pṛthā bhrātṝn svasṝr vīkṣya tat-putrān pitarāv api

bhrātṛ-patnīr mukundaṁ ca jahau saṅkathayā śucaḥ

TRANSLATION

Queen Kuntī met with her brothers and sisters and their children, and also with her parents, her brothers’ wives and Lord Mukunda. While talking with them she forgot her sorrow.

|| 10.82.18 ||

kunty uvāca

ārya bhrātar ahaṁ manye ātmānam akṛtāśiṣam

yad vā āpatsu mad-vārtāṁ nānusmaratha sattamāḥ

TRANSLATION

Queen Kuntī said: My dear, respectable brother, I feel that my desires have been frustrated, because although all of you are most saintly, you forgot me during my calamities.

COMMENTARY

Queen Kuntī said, “I think myself devoid of pious acts (*akṛtāśiṣam: akṛta-sukṛtam*), since you my dear brother (Vasudeva), though so proper in conduct, did not remember me when I was in difficulty. It was my bad fortune; it was not your fault.”

|| 10.82.19 ||

suhṛdo jñātayaḥ putrā bhrātaraḥ pitarāv api

nānusmaranti sva-janaṁ yasya daivam adakṣiṇam

TRANSLATION

Friends and family members—even children, brothers and parents—forget a dear one whom Providence no longer favors.

COMMENTARY

Kuntī did not blame her relatives for her suffering. Thus she addressed them as “most saintly persons” (*sat-tamāḥ*) in verse eighteen, and here alludes to her own bad fortune as the cause of her unhappiness.

|| 10.82.20 ||

śrī-vasudeva uvāca

amba māsmān asūyethā daiva-krīḍanakān narān

īśasya hi vaśe lokaḥ kurute kāryate ’tha vā

TRANSLATION

Śrī Vasudeva said: Dear sister, please do not be angry with us. We are only ordinary men, playthings of fate. Indeed, whether a person acts on his own or is forced by others, he is always under the Supreme Lord’s control.

COMMENTARY

Vasudeva replied, “O most affectionate one (*amba*), my dear younger sister! Do not find fault in us who are like play things in the hands of fate. One acts on his own, or is made to act under the control of the Lord.”

|| 10.82.21 ||

kaṁsa-pratāpitāḥ sarve vayaṁ yātā diśaṁ diśam

etarhy eva punaḥ sthānaṁ daivenāsāditāḥ svasaḥ

TRANSLATION

Harassed by Kaṁsa, we all fled in various directions, but by the grace of Providence we have now finally been able to return to our homes, my dear sister.

COMMENTARY

Vasudeva said, "Tormented by Kaṁsa, we all fled to various places." This statement refers to other Yādavas who had fled in fear of Kaṁsa. (Vasudeva was imprisoned so he could not flee.) "O sister (*svasaḥ*)! We have just now (*etarhi eva*) returned to our homes."

|| 10.82.22 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

vasudevograsenādyair yadubhis te 'rcitā nṛpāḥ

āsann acyuta-sandarśa-paramānanda-nirvṛtāḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Vasudeva, Ugrasena and the other Yadus honored the various kings, who became supremely blissful and content upon seeing Lord Acyuta.

|| 10.82.23-26 ||

bhīṣmo droṇo 'mbikā-putro gāndhārī sa-sutā tathā

sa-dārāḥ pāṇḍavāḥ kuntī sañjayo viduraḥ kṛpaḥ

kuntībhojo virāṭaś ca bhīṣmako nagnajin mahān

purujid drūpadaḥ śalyo dhṛṣṭaketuḥ sa kāśi-rāṭ

damaghoṣo viśālākṣo maithilo madra-kekayau

yudhāmanyuḥ suśarmā ca sa-sutā bāhlikādayaḥ

rājāno ye ca rājendra yudhiṣṭhiram anuvratāḥ

śrī-niketaṁ vapuḥ śaureḥ sa-strīkaṁ vīkṣya vismitāḥ

TRANSLATION

All the royalty present, including Bhīṣma, Droṇa, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Gāndhārī and her sons, the Pāṇḍavas and their wives, Kuntī, Sañjaya, Vidura, Kṛpācārya, Kuntībhoja, Virāṭa, Bhīṣmaka, the great Nagnajit, Purujit, Drūpada, Śalya, Dhṛṣṭaketu, Kāśirāja, Damaghoṣa, Viśālākṣa, Maithila, Madra, Kekaya, Yudhāmanyu, Suśarmā, Bāhlika with his associates and their sons, and the many other kings subservient to Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira—all of them, O best of kings, were simply amazed to see the transcendental form of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the abode of all opulence and beauty, standing before them with His consorts.

COMMENTARY

At this time Yudhiṣṭhira had been given half the kingdom. Therefore all these kings are described as being subservient (*anuvrataḥ*) to Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira.

|| 10.82.27 ||

atha te rāma-kṛṣṇābhyāṁ samyak prāpta-samarhaṇāḥ

praśaśaṁsur mudā yuktā vṛṣṇīn kṛṣṇa-parigrahān

TRANSLATION

After Lord Balarāma and Lord Kṛṣṇa had liberally honored them, with great joy and enthusiasm these kings began to praise the members of the Vṛṣṇi clan, Śrī Kṛṣṇa's personal associates.

|| 10.82.28 ||

aho bhoja-pate yūyaṁ janma-bhājo nṛṇām iha

yat paśyathāsakṛt kṛṣṇaṁ durdarśam api yoginām

TRANSLATION

[The kings said:] O King of the Bhojas, you alone among men have achieved a truly exalted birth, for you continually behold Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is rarely visible even to great yogīs.

|| 10.82.29-30 ||

yad-viśrutiḥ śruti-nutedam alaṁ punāti

pādāvanejana-payaś ca vacaś ca śāstram

bhūḥ kāla-bharjita-bhagāpi yad-aṅghri-padma-

sparśottha-śaktir abhivarṣati no 'khilārthān

tad-darśana-sparśanānupatha-prajalpa-

śayyāsanāśana-sayauna-sapiṇḍa-bandhaḥ

yeṣāṁ gṛhe niraya-vartmani vartatāṁ vaḥ

svargāpavarga-viramaḥ svayam āsa viṣṇuḥ

TRANSLATION

His fame, as broadcast by the Vedas, the water that has washed His feet, and the words He speaks in the form of the revealed scriptures—these thoroughly purify this universe. Although the earth's good fortune was ravaged by time, the touch of His lotus feet has revitalized her, and thus she is raining down on us the fulfillment of all our desires. The same Lord Viṣṇu who makes one forget the goals of heaven and liberation has now entered into marital and blood relationships with you, who otherwise travel on the hellish path of family life. Indeed, in these relationships you see and touch Him directly, walk beside Him, converse with Him, and together with Him lie down to rest, sit at ease and take your meals.

COMMENTARY

(Text 29) "Furthermore, not only do you regularly see Kṛṣṇa, but due to your piety you have His constant personal association." This is stated in these two verses.

The kings said, "Śrī Kṛṣṇa, whose fame (*viśrutiḥ*) is praised by the *Vedas* (*śruti-nute:vedaiḥ stutā*), thoroughly purifies this universe. Kṛṣṇa's foot water, the Gaṅgā, and His words contained in the *Vedas* also purify the universe. Though time has ravaged the fortune of the earth, the touch of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet has revived her. Thus she is raining down upon us to fulfill all our material needs."

(Text 30) The kings said, "Kṛṣṇa, with whom you have relation through marriage and descent, has appeared in your house. Thus you always get the chance to personally see Him, touch Him, walk with Him, talk with Him, sleep, sit and eat with Him. Within the sinless, Kṛṣṇa creates a distaste for attaining heaven and liberation."

The word *bandhaḥ* in *sa-piṇḍa-bandhaḥ* (connections in blood relationships) besides its more obvious meaning of "relation," can also be understood in the sense of "capture," expressing that the love the Yadus feel for Kṛṣṇa obliges Him always to stay with them.

|| 10.82.31 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

nandas tatra yadūn prāptān jñātvā kṛṣṇa-purogamān

tatrāgamad vṛto gopair anaḥ-sthārthair didṛkṣayā

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: When Nanda Mahārāja learned that the Yadus had arrived, led by Kṛṣṇa, he immediately went to see them. The cowherds accompanied him, their various possessions loaded on their wagons.

COMMENTARY

Nanda Mahārāja was accompanied by cowherd men on carts loaded with milk products and other foods, which they intended to feed Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma while living with Them at Kurukṣetra.

|| 10.82.32 ||

taṁ dṛṣṭvā vṛṣṇayo hṛṣṭās tanvaḥ prāṇam ivotthitāḥ

pariṣasvajire gāḍhaṁ cira-darśana-kātarāḥ

TRANSLATION

Seeing Nanda, the Vṛṣṇis were delighted and stood up like dead bodies coming back to life. Having felt much distress at not seeing him for so long, they held him in a tight embrace.

|| 10.82.33 ||

vasudevaḥ pariṣvajya samprītaḥ prema-vihvalaḥ

smaran kaṁsa-kṛtān kleśān putra-nyāsaṁ ca gokule

TRANSLATION

Vasudeva embraced Nanda Mahārāja with great joy. Beside himself with ecstatic love, Vasudeva remembered the troubles Kaṁsa had caused him, forcing him to leave his sons in Gokula for Their safety.

|| 10.82.34 ||

kṛṣṇa-rāmau pariṣvajya pitarāv abhivādya ca

na kiñcanocatuḥ premṇā sāśru-kaṇṭhau kurūdvaha

TRANSLATION

O hero of the Kurus, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma embraced Their foster parents and bowed down to them, but Their throats were so choked up with tears of love that the two Lords could say nothing.

COMMENTARY

The word *pariṣvajya*, "embracing" implies that Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were first embraced by Their parents, and then They embraced Their parents in return. After Nanda and Yaśodā released Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma from their loving embrace, the brothers offered obeisances to them. Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma could not say anything because Their throats were choked up with tears of love (*premṇā-āśru*).

|| 10.82.35 ||

tāv ātmāsanam āropya bāhubhyāṁ parirabhya ca

yaśodā ca mahā-bhāgā sutau vijahatuḥ śucaḥ

TRANSLATION

Raising their two sons onto their laps and holding Them in their arms, Nanda and saintly mother Yaśodā forgot their sorrow.

COMMENTARY

Vasudeva led Nanda and Yaśodā into his tent as they held the hands of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. Following them inside were Rohinī, other women and men of Vraja, and a number of attendants. Then what did Nanda and Yaśodā do? This verse answers.

First Nanda and then Yaśodā eagerly welcomed their sons. How was it possible for them to offer their own seats to their sons who now showed such opulence? This is answered by the word *sutau* (sons), which implies that Nanda and Yaśodā, due to their spontaneous parental love, always thought of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma as their eight-year-old sons, even though they had heard about and seen their opulences and powers. While sitting with Nanda and Yaśodā and being embraced by them, Kṛṣṇa fully transformed into a cowherd boy. Thus it is stated that Nanda and Yaśodā gave up (*vijahatuḥ*) their sorrow (*śucaḥ*) in separation.

|| 10.82.36 ||

rohiṇī devakī cātha pariṣvajya vrajeśvarīm

smarantyau tat-kṛtāṁ maitrīṁ bāṣpa-kaṇṭhyau samūcatuḥ

TRANSLATION

Then Rohiṇī and Devakī both embraced the Queen of Vraja, remembering the faithful friendship she had shown them. Their throats choking with tears, they addressed her as follows.

COMMENTARY

At this time, Vasudeva called Nanda outside to meet Ugrasena and the other elder Yadus. Taking this opportunity, Rohiṇī and Devakī talked with Queen Yaśodā.

|| 10.82.37 ||

kā vismareta vāṁ maitrīm anivṛttāṁ vrajeśvari

avāpyāpy aindram aiśvaryaṁ yasyā neha pratikriyā

TRANSLATION

[Rohiṇī and Devakī said:] What woman could forget the unceasing friendship you and Nanda have shown us, dear Queen of Vraja? There is no way to repay you in this world, even with the wealth of Indra.

COMMENTARY

While keeping Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma on her lap and embracing them, Yaśodā's mind became completely bewildered and stunned in bliss. Tears and milk poured from her eyes and breasts in continuous streams like the rivers Gaṇgā and Yamunā.

Of the two ladies seated before her, Rohiṇī spoke first: "Even if we attain the wealth of Indra, there is no way to repay you for your friendship." The opulence of Dvārakā far exceeded that of Indra, but since this expression is for the common man, Rohiṇī only mentioned Indra's wealth.

|| 10.82.38 ||

etāv adṛṣṭa-pitarau yuvayoḥ sma pitroḥ

samprīṇanābhyudaya-poṣaṇa-pālanāni

prāpyoṣatur bhavati pakṣma ha yadvad akṣṇor

nyastāv akutra ca bhayau na satāṁ paraḥ svaḥ

TRANSLATION

Before these two boys had ever seen Their real parents, you acted as Their parents and gave Them all affectionate care, training, nourishment and protection. They were never afraid, good lady, because you protected Them just as eyelids protect the eyes. Indeed, saintly persons like you never discriminate between outsiders and their own kin.

COMMENTARY

Before speaking this verse, Devakī thought, "Alas, for so long these two sons of mine had Yaśodā as Their guardian and mother. Because They were immersed in such a vast ocean of ecstatic loving dealings with her, now that she is here They do not even look at us, even though we are standing before Them. Blinded by her love for Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, Yaśodā is behaving as if insane. She is showing millions of times more motherly affection than I could ever possess. Thus Yaśodā simply keeps staring at us, her friends, without even recognizing us. So let me bring her back to reality on the pretext of some affectionate words."

Devakī then spoke in a somewhat loud voice: "Having not seen their real parents (*adṛṣṭa-pitarau*) these two boys received great affection from you two as parents. I placed Them safely with you and They lived there without fear. You protected Them, just as the eyelids protect the eye, because great devotees do not distinguish between their own or other children (*nas satāṁ paraḥ svaḥ*)."

The actual fact, however, is that Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma "had not seen Their parents" (*adṛṣṭa-pitarau*) for two reasons: because of Their exile in Vraja, and also because They are never actually born and therefore have no parents. When Devakī failed to get any response from Yaśodā even after addressing her, Rohiṇī said, "My dear Devakī, it is impossible just now to rouse Yaśodā out of this ecstatic trance. We are crying in the wilderness, as her two sons are also bound up by the ropes of affection for her. Let us now go outside to meet with Kuntī, Draupadī and other friends who are very eager to see us. Because of having to meet with so many people on this pilgrimage, we simply do not have enough time to stay long in only one place." After saying this, Rohiṇī went outside with Devakī.

|| 10.82.39 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

gopyaś ca kṛṣṇam upalabhya cirād abhīṣṭaṁ

yat-prekṣaṇe dṛśiṣu pakṣma-kṛtaṁ śapanti

dṛgbhir hṛdī-kṛtam alaṁ parirabhya sarvās

tad-bhāvam āpur api nitya-yujāṁ durāpam

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: While gazing at their beloved Kṛṣṇa, the young gopīs used to condemn the creator of their eyelids, [which would momentarily block their vision of Him]. Now, seeing Kṛṣṇa again after such a long separation, with their eyes they took Him into their hearts, and there they embraced Him to their full satisfaction. In this way they became totally absorbed in ecstatic meditation on Him, although those who constantly practice mystic yoga find such absorption difficult to achieve.

COMMENTARY

Just then Baladeva saw the *gopīs* standing a short distance away. Seeing them trembling with eagerness to meet Kṛṣṇa, and apparently ready to give up their lives if they could not, Balarāma, the crest-jewel of expert gentlemen, tactfully decided to get up and involve Himself elsewhere. The *gopīs* then attained the ecstatic state described in this verse.

In some editions, Śukadeva Gosvāmī is referred to by the phrase *ṛṣi uvāca*. By designating Śukadeva as a *ṛṣi* (great sage), there is indication that he will here reveal the highest truth. In the phrase *gopyas ca* the word *ca* (and) carries the meaning of the word *tu* (but) to distinguish the special position of the gopīs from all others. Who were these gopīs? In answer to this, their extraordinary quality is then described.

The Vraja-gopīs were the ones who cursed the creator Brahmā for making eyelids which obstructed their vision of Kṛṣṇa. Though as women the gopīs ordinarily would have shown the highest respect to any demigod, but under the impulse of ecstatic love they even cursed the chief of all the demigods. Such was the intolerance of their separation from seeing Kṛṣṇa. Here Śukadeva Gosvāmī gives vent to his own subtle jealousy of the gopīs, to whom Kṛṣṇa had bestowed such intense feelings of separation.

Pulling Kṛṣṇa toward themselves with their glances (*dṛgbhir: avalokanaiḥ*), the gopīs took Him into their hearts through the doorway of their eyes. They wrapped Him in a tight embrace, and then attained a rare state of *mahābhāva*, ecstatic absorption in Kṛṣṇa (*tad-bhāvam*). Overwhelmed with a sense of oneness with Kṛṣṇa, the gopīs then made such statements as *kṛṣṇo 'ham paśyata gatiṁ*, "I am Kṛṣṇa! Just see how gracefully I move!" (SB 10.30.19)

Another meaning: The gopīs achieved a state that is rarely (*durāpam*) attained even by the crest-jewel of self-satisfied sages (*nitya-yujām*) and the great masters of *yoga* such as Śiva. This statement, together with the idea that even though the gopīs are of such a status, Kṛṣṇa will now teach them *adhyātma-jñāna* (knowledge of the self), as He did

in His message sent through Uddhava, is a further expression of Śukadeva Gosvāmī's jealousy.

Or else the meaning is: The *gopīs* attained *mahābhāva*, which is rarely achieved even by the *nitya-yujām*, which can refer to Kṛṣṇa's principal queens in Dvārakā like Rukmiṇī, who tend to be proud of their constant association with Him.

|| 10.82.40 ||

bhagavāṁs tās tathā-bhūtā vivikta upasaṅgataḥ

āśliṣyānāmayaṁ pṛṣṭvā prahasann idam abravīt

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord approached the gopīs in a secluded place as they stood in their ecstatic trance. After embracing each of them and inquiring about their well-being, He laughed and spoke as follows.

COMMENTARY

Then getting up from Yaśodā's lap, Kṛṣṇa went to a secluded place to talk and mingle freely with the gopīs, who were stunned in ecstasy as described in the previous verse. Kṛṣṇa expanded Himself by His *vibhūti-śakti* to embrace each of the *gopīs* individually. Kṛṣṇa embraced them so tightly that each *gopī* woke up from her ecstatic trance. He inquired, "Are you now relieved of your pain of separation?" and laughed to help lighten their spirits.

|| 10.82.41 ||

api smaratha naḥ sakhyaḥ svānām artha-cikīrṣayā

gatāṁś cirāyitāñ chatru-pakṣa-kṣapaṇa-cetasaḥ

TRANSLATION

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] My dear girīfriends, do you still remember Me? It was for My relatives' sake that I stayed away so long, intent on destroying My enemies.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, "For the sake of My relatives such as Vasudeva, I went off to kill Kaṁsa and other demons. Due to being absorbed in vanquishing the armies of the demons, I have been delayed and have not found an opportunity to return to Vraja. Nevertheless, do you still remember Me?"

|| 10.82.42 ||

apy avadhyāyathāsmān svid akṛta-jñāviśaṅkayā

nūnaṁ bhūtāni bhagavān yunakti viyunakti ca

TRANSLATION

Do you perhaps think I'm ungrateful and thus hold Me in contempt? After all, it is the Supreme Lord who brings living beings together and then separates them.

COMMENTARY

At this point the gopīs were thinking: "We are not like You, who, with Your heart shattered by remembering us day and night, gave up all sense enjoyment in Your distress of separation. Rather, we have not remembered You at all; in fact, we have been quite happy without You."

Seeing that the gopīs were answering angrily by moving their eye brows to suggest the above words, Kṛṣṇa spoke: "Do you perhaps hold Us in contempt because of the suspicion (*āvisaṅkayā*) that 'He is ungrateful?' Well, if that is the case, what can I do about this? Please listen to the facts. It is the Supreme Lord who unites and separates all living beings."

|| 10.82.43 ||

vāyur yathā ghanānīkaṁ tṛṇaṁ tūlaṁ rajāṁsi ca

saṁyojyākṣipate bhūyas tathā bhūtāni bhūta-kṛt

TRANSLATION

Just as the wind brings together masses of clouds, blades of grass, wisps of cotton and particles of dust, only to scatter them all again, so the creator deals with His created beings in the same way.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa cites an analogy to explain His point. Just as the wind unites and separates (*ākṣipate*) clouds, grass, dust and cotton, the Lord unites and separates all living entities.

|| 10.82.44 ||

mayi bhaktir hi bhūtānām amṛtatvāya kalpate

diṣṭyā yad āsīn mat-sneho bhavatīnāṁ mad-āpanaḥ

TRANSLATION

Rendering devotional service to Me qualifies any living being for eternal life. But by your good fortune you have developed a special loving attitude toward Me, by which you have obtained Me.

COMMENTARY

The gopīs replied, "O crest-jewel of clever speakers! That Supreme Lord You are blaming is none other than Yourself. Everyone in the world knows this! Why should we be ignorant of this fact?"

"But My dear girlfriends," Kṛṣṇa replied, "If this is true, I must be God, but still I am conquered by your loving affection."

Thus Kṛṣṇa speaks this verse: "Just by devotion to Me, one can achieve liberation (*amṛtatvāya*). But that you have attained affection for Me is My good fortune (*diṣṭyā*), since it causes you to attain Me (*mad āpanaḥ*)." The hidden meaning of Kṛṣṇa's words is as follows: "Your affection drags Me to you by force. It brings Me close to you, and it assures that very soon I will come to remain permanently with you."

|| 10.82.45 ||

ahaṁ hi sarva-bhūtānām ādir anto 'ntaraṁ bahiḥ

bhautikānāṁ yathā khaṁ vār bhūr vāyur jyotir aṅganāḥ

TRANSLATION

Dear ladies, I am the beginning and end of all created beings and exist both within and without them, just as the elements ether, water, earth, air and fire are the beginning and end of all material objects and exist both within and without them.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, "Furthermore, if you know that I am the Supreme Lord, then you should not feel any suffering in separation from Me. Your unhappiness must be due to a lack of discrimination. Therefore please take this instruction from Me, which will remove your ignorance. Actually the truth of the matter is that you *gopīs* were great masters of *yoga* in your previous lives, and thus you must already know this science of *jñāna-yoga*. Furthermore, whether I try to teach you personally or through My

representative such as Uddhava, it will not produce the desired result. *Jñāna-yoga* simply causes suffering for those who are fully immersed in pure love of Godhead." With this idea in mind Kṛṣṇa speaks this verse.

Kṛṣṇa said, "Of all beings, namely demigods, humans and animals I am the beginning and end. I am present both inside and outside of them, just as the five primary elements (earth, water, air, fire, ether) exist within all bodies from beginning to end. O young ladies (*aṅganāḥ*)! Since you are only women, you do not understand this truth about Me."

|| 10.82.46 ||

evaṁ hy etāni bhūtāni bhūteṣv ātmātmanā tataḥ

ubhayaṁ mayy atha pare paśyatābhātam akṣare

TRANSLATION

In this way all created things reside within the basic elements of creation, while the spirit souls pervade the creation, remaining in their own true identity. You should see both of these—the material creation and the self—as manifest within Me, the imperishable Supreme Truth.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, "In this way (*evam hi*) the material elements such as ether exist in the bodies (*bhūtānām*) of all created beings, and the soul (*ātmā:jīva*) pervades the body in his own true form (*ātmanā:svarūpeṇa*). You should see that the material elements, their products and the living entities are all manifested (*ābhātam:prak*ā*sitam*) within and pervaded by Me, the imperishable, perfectly complete Supreme Soul (*pare:paramātma*) and underlying reality (*adhiṣṭhāna-tattva*) of everything. Thus it is established that your bodies and souls exist within Me at all times. Therefore, what is the source of your feelings of separation from Me? It is simply caused by your lack of discrimination.''

|| 10.82.47 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

adhyātma-śikṣayā gopya evaṁ kṛṣṇena śikṣitāḥ

tad-anusmaraṇa-dhvasta-jīva-kośās tam adhyagan

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having thus been instructed by Kṛṣṇa in spiritual matters, the gopīs were freed of all tinges of false ego because of their incessant meditation upon Him. And with their deepening absorption in Him, they came to understand Him fully.

COMMENTARY

The esoteric meaning of the above five verses (42-46) is found in *Vaiṣṇava-tośaṇi*. These instructions on spiritual knowledge (*adhyātma-śikṣayā*) enlightened (*sikṣitāḥ:bodhitāḥ*) the gopīs. The scorching sun of the gopīs' incessant meditation (*anusmaraṇa*) on Kṛṣṇa arising from their feelings of separation from Him destroyed the inner essence (*kośa:antar-bhāgaḥ*) of their night blooming, lotus-like lives (*jīvana-kumudasya*), just as a flower is destroyed by excessive sunlight. The only thing that kept the gopīs alive was their hope of attaining Kṛṣṇa.

The gopīs realized (*aḍhyagan*) that "He who taught us about *dharma* at the beginning of the *rāsa* dance, even though we had not inquired about it, and who instructed us in the principles of theoretical knowledge through Uddhava, is now again teaching us philosophical knowledge (*adhyātma-śikṣayā*). We should know that this is Kṛṣṇa's nature and it is hard for Him to give it up."

It is not correct to say that *jīva-kośās* means the subtle material body (*liṅga-deha*) of the *gopīs*, because the eternal associates of Kṛṣṇa do not have material bodies. It cannot be accepted that even the *sādhana-siddha gopīs* who enjoyed with Kṛṣṇa had material bodies.

|| 10.82.48 ||

āhuś ca te nalina-nābha padāravindaṁ

yogeśvarair hṛdi vicintyam agādha-bodhaiḥ

saṁsāra-kūpa-patitottaraṇāvalambaṁ

gehaṁ juṣām api manasy udiyāt sadā naḥ

TRANSLATION

The gopīs spoke thus: Dear Lord, whose navel is just like a lotus flower, Your lotus feet are the only shelter for those who have fallen into the deep well of material existence. Your feet are worshiped and meditated upon by great mystic yogīs and highly learned philosophers. We wish that these lotus feet may also be awakened within our hearts, although we are only ordinary persons engaged in household affairs.

COMMENTARY

Āhuś ca, “the gopīs said” implies that these seemingly reverential words were actually spoken by the gopīs in the following mood of anger: “O Supreme Lord. O directly manifest Supersoul, O crest jewel of teachers of philosophical knowledge! Understanding that we have great attachment to house, wealth and family, You previously had Uddhava instruct us and now personally You are purifying our hearts with knowledge to destroy that ignorance. Thus we understand that Your pure love for us is free from any motivation other than assuring our liberation. But how can we unintelligent cowherd women fix that knowledge in our hearts? We cannot even meditate steadily on Your feet, the focus of realization for great souls like Brahmā. Therefore please be merciful to us and do something to make that possible.

“We are still suffering the reactions of our *karma*, so how can we meditate on Your feet, which are the object of meditation for the masters of *yoga* (*yogeśvarair*). Such *yogīs* are immeasurably wise, but we are mere feeble-minded women. Please do something to get us out of this deep well of suffering in material life?”

The gopīs statement, “May Your lotus feet arise in the minds (*manasy udiyāt*) of us who are so attached to family life” reveals their hidden anger. The following verses illustrate that pure devotees are never motivated by a desire for material elevation or spiritual liberation. Even if Kṛṣṇa offers such benedictions, they often refuse to accept them.

na pārameṣṭhyaṁ na mahendra-dhiṣṇyaṁ,

na sārvabhaumaṁ na rasādhipatyam

na yoga-siddhīr apunar-bhavaṁ vā,

mayy arpitātmecchati mad vinānyat

“One who has fixed his consciousness on Me desires neither the position or abode of Lord Brahmā or Lord Indra, nor an empire on the earth, nor sovereignty in the lower planetary systems, nor the eightfold perfection of *yoga*, nor liberation from birth and death. Such a person desires Me alone.” (SB 11.14.14)

na kiñcit sādhavo dhīrā bhaktā hy ekāntino mama

vāñchanty api mayā dattaṁ kaivalyam apunar-bhavam

“Because My devotees possess saintly behavior and deep intelligence, they completely dedicate themselves to Me and do not desire anything besides Me. Indeed, even if I offer them liberation from birth and death, they do not accept it.” (SB 11.20.34)

svargāpavarga-narakeṣv, api tulyārtha-darsinaḥ

> “My pure devotees regard heaven and hell as one and the same.” (SB 6.17.28) Kṛṣṇa’s devotees never accept liberation, which is the result of *jñāna*, even if it is offered by the Supreme Lord Himself. How then could the gopīs, the crest-jewels of all devotees, accept this knowledge? Thus it is appropriate that they express anger in this verse (Text 48) upon hearing the unbearable teachings of spiritual knowledge (*adhyātmā-jñāna*) from the mouth of their most beloved. It is clear that such interpretations of this verse, which come through oral tradition, are valid for this scripture which is full of double meanings.

The words the gopīs speak in this verse may also be interpreted as follows: “O sun who directly destroys the darkness of ignorance, we are scorched by the heat of this philosophical knowledge. We are *cakora* birds who live only on the moonlight radiating from the moon of Your beautiful face. Therefore come back to Vṛndāvana and bring us to life with Your pastimes such as *rāsa-līlā*.

“The masters of *yoga* meditate upon Your lotus feet within their hearts, but we hold them above our hearts, upon our breasts. Only by holding them are we able to maintain our lives and not otherwise. Those with deep intelligence (*agādha-bodhaiḥ:gambhīra-buddhibhiḥ*) meditate on Your feet, but we have shallow intelligence. Therefore, as soon as we start meditating on Your lotus feet we drown in the ocean of swooning, so what is the question of meditating? Furthermore, meditation upon them is the means of upliftment from the well of material existence. But such meditation cannot uplift us who have fallen into an ocean of separation from You. Certainly we gopīs have not fallen in the well of material life, having renounced the happiness of husband, home and children from an early age.”

If Kṛṣṇa says, “Come to Dvārakā and I will enjoy with you there,” the gopīs reply, “Śrī Vṛndāvana is our home, and we are too attached to it to take up residence anywhere else. It is there alone that You attract us by wearing peacock feathers in Your turban and playing enchanting music on Your flute. We can be saved only by seeing You in Vraja, and not by any other kind of meditation or theoretical knowledge of the self (*ātmā-jñāna*)”

Thus ends the commentary on the Eighty-second Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Draupadī Meets the Queens of Kṛṣṇa

|| 10.83.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

tathānugṛhya bhagavān gopīnāṁ sa gurur gatiḥ

yudhiṣṭhiram athāpṛcchat sarvāṁś ca suhṛdo ’vyayam

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus Lord Kṛṣṇa, the spiritual master of the gopīs and the very purpose of their life, showed them His mercy. He then met with Yudhiṣṭhira and all His other relatives and inquired from them about their welfare.

COMMENTARY

In this chapter Kṛṣṇa is praised by His relatives. On inquiry from Draupadī, the queens of Kṛṣṇa describe how He married them. Just as Kṛṣṇa satisfied the gopīs, He was also merciful to others. Kṛṣṇa inquired from Yudhiṣṭhira and all His relatives about their welfare (*avyayam:kuśalam*). The words *gurur gatiḥ* (spiritual master and goal) means that Kṛṣṇa is the guru and goal for all devotees, but for the gopīs specifically Kṛṣṇa is the greatest (*guru*) object (*gatiḥ*) of love.

|| 10.83.2 ||

ta evaṁ loka-nāthena paripṛṣṭāḥ su-sat-kṛtāḥ

pratyūcur hṛṣṭa-manasas tat-pādekṣā-hatāṁhasaḥ

TRANSLATION

Feeling greatly honored, King Yudhiṣṭhira and the others, freed of all sinful reactions by seeing the feet of the Lord of the universe, gladly answered His inquiries.

|| 10.83.3 ||

kuto ’śivaṁ tvac-caraṇāmbujāsavaṁ mahan-manasto mukha-niḥsṛtaṁ kvacit

pibanti ye karṇa-puṭair alaṁ prabho dehaṁ-bhṛtāṁ deha-kṛd-asmṛti-cchidam

TRANSLATION

[Lord Kṛṣṇa’s relatives said:] O master, how can misfortune arise for those who have even once freely drunk the nectar coming from Your lotus feet? This intoxicating liquor pours into the drinking cups of their ears, having flowed from the minds of great devotees through their mouths. It destroys the embodied souls’ forgetfulness of the creator of their bodily existence.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa’s relatives said, “What can be inauspicious for those with material bodies who drink through their ears the nectar of Your lotus feet, which flows from the minds of great devotees (*mahan-manasto*) out through their mouths to destroy the ignorance (*asmṛti:avidyā*) which produced our bodies?”

|| 10.83.4 ||

hi tvātma dhāma-vidhutātma-kṛta-try-avasthām

ānanda-samplavam akhaṇḍam akuṇṭha-bodham

kālopasṛṣṭa-nigamāvana ātta-yoga-

māyākṛtiṁ paramahaṁsa-gatiṁ natāḥ sma

TRANSLATION

The radiance of Your personal form dispels the threefold effects of material consciousness, and by Your grace we become immersed in total happiness. Your knowledge is indivisible and unrestricted. By Your Yogamāyā potency You have assumed this human form for protecting the Vedas, which had been threatened by time. We bow down to You, the final destination of perfect saints.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa's relatives said, "Certainly we bow down to You, who simply by the effulgent light emanating from Your beautiful form (*ātma dhāma:sva-vigraha-prakāśena*) sever (*vidhuta:khaṇḍitāḥ*) the *jivas*' entanglement in the modes of goodness, passion and ignorance. How then can we ever suffer any misfortune? For we are always submerged in ecstasy by seeing You. "The knowledge (*bodham:jñānam*) You possess is completely unaffected by time or other elements. Thus You know that our hearts are always inclined to surrender unto You. Utilizing Your divine power of illusion (*yogamāyā*), You perform pastimes (*kṛtiṁ*) of destroying demons and protecting Your devotees in order to uphold (*avane*) the Vedic standards which have become ruined (*upasṛṣṭa:naśṭānām*) by time. In other words, You give happiness to everyone."

|| 10.83.5 ||

śrī-ṛṣir uvāca

ity uttamaḥ-śloka-śikhā-maṇiṁ janeṣv abhiṣṭuvatsv andhaka-kaurava-striyaḥ

sametya govinda-kathā mitho 'gṛnaṁs tri-loka-gītāḥ śṛṇu varṇayāmi te

TRANSLATION

The great sage Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: As Yudhiṣṭhira and the others were thus praising Lord Kṛṣṇa, the crest jewel of all sublimely glorified personalities, the women of the Andhaka and Kaurava clans met with one another and began discussing topics about Govinda that are sung throughout the three worlds. Please listen as I relate these to you.

COMMENTARY

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said, "Now I will tell you the topics they discussed that are sung throughout the three worlds."

|| 10.83.6-7 ||

śrī-draupady uvāca

he vaidarbhy acyuto bhadre he jāmbavati kauśale

he satyabhāme kālindi śaibye rohiṇi lakṣmaṇe

he kṛṣṇa-patnya etan no brūte vo bhagavān svayam

upayeme yathā lokam anukurvan sva-māyayā

TRANSLATION

Śrī Draupadī said: O Vaidarbhī, Bhadrā and Jāmbavatī, O Kauśalā, Satyabhāmā and Kālindī, O Śaibyā, Rohiṇī, Lakṣmaṇā and other wives of Lord Kṛṣṇa, please tell me how the Supreme Lord Acyuta, imitating the ways of this world by His mystic power, came to marry each of you.

COMMENTARY

Draupadī said, "O queens, please tell us in truth how Kṛṣṇa (*acyuto*) married you." Or else, "Please tell how He married you without cheating." *Kauśale* refers to Queen Nāgnajitī.

|| 10.83.8 ||

śrī-rukmiṇy uvāca

caidyāya mārpayitum udyata-kārmukeṣu

rājasv ajeya-bhaṭa-śekharitāṅghri-reṇuḥ

ninye mṛgendra iva bhāgam ajāvi-yūthāt

tac-chrī-niketa-caraṇo 'stu mamārcanāya

TRANSLATION

Śrī Rukmiṇī said: When all the kings held their bows at the ready to assure that I would be presented to Śiśupāla, He who puts the dust of His feet on the heads of invincible warriors took me from their midst, as a lion forcibly takes his prey from the midst of goats and sheep. May I always be allowed to worship those feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the abode of Goddess Śrī.

COMMENTARY

Rukmiṇī said, "To make sure I would be offered to Śiśupāla, kings such as Jarāsandha were standing with bows ready to shoot. Kṛṣṇa however, whose foot dust is held on the heads of the invincible warriors, took me away just as a lion takes away his share from a herd of goats or sheep. May Kṛṣṇa's feet, which are the abode of Lakṣmī, be the goal of my worship."

|| 10.83.9 ||

śrī-satyabhāmovāca

yo me sanābhi-vadha-tapta-hṛdā tatena

liptābhiśāpam apamārṣṭum upājahāra

jitvarkṣa-rājam atha ratnam adāt sa tena

bhītaḥ pitādiśata māṁ prabhave 'pi dattām

TRANSLATION

Śrī Satyabhāmā said: My father, his heart tormented by his brothers death, accused Kṛṣṇa of killing him. To remove the stain on His reputation, the Lord defeated the king of the bears and took back the Syamantaka jewel, which He then returned to my father. Fearing the consequences of his offense, my father offered me to the Lord, even though I had already been promised to others.

COMMENTARY

Satyabhāmā said, "In order to remove the ill fame created by my father (*tatena*) who, aggrieved by the killing of his brother (*sanābhi*) Prasena, accused Him of the deed, Kṛṣṇa defeated Ṛkṣarāja and brought back the Syamantaka jewel. Kṛṣṇa then gave the jewel to my father. Fearing his offense, my father gave me to Kṛṣṇa (*prabhave*), even though I had already been promised (*dattām*) to Akrūra and other suitors."

|| 10.83.10 ||

śrī-jāmbavaty uvāca

prājñāya deha-kṛd amuṁ nija-nātha-daivaṁ

sītā-patiṁ tri-navahāny amunābhyayudhyat

jñātvā parīkṣita upāharad arhaṇaṁ māṁ

pādau pragṛhya maṇināham amuṣya dāsī

TRANSLATION

Śrī Jāmbavatī said: Unaware that Lord Kṛṣṇa was none other than his own master and worshipable Deity, the husband of Goddess Sītā, my father fought with Him for twenty-seven days. When my father finally came to his senses and recognized the Lord, he took hold of His feet and presented Him with both me and the Syamantaka jewel as tokens of his reverence. I am simply the Lord's maidservant.

COMMENTARY

Jāmbavatī said, "Not knowing that Kṛṣṇa was his master and the Supreme Lord, my father (*deha-kṛd*) fought with Him for twenty-seven days. When his discrimination awakened, Jāmbavān understood "this is the Lord of Sītā," and taking hold of His feet, he offered me along with the jewel to Kṛṣṇa."

The other queens said, "Now we recognize you as the girl whom we heard about in the ancient narrations. Jāmbavān had once offered you to Lord Rāma to be His wife. Since

Rāma had taken a vow to have only one wife, He refused to accept you then, but did so when He returned in Dvāpara-yuga as Kṛṣṇa. Now you have been accepted by Kṛṣṇa, who has vowed to take many wives, and thus you are the best of women." Hearing this, Jāmbavatī became embarrassed and humbly replied, "I am only Kṛṣṇa's servant." In the word *tri-navahāny*, the *a* is short to comply with the rules of meter.

|| 10.83.11 ||

śrī-kālindy uvāca

tapaś carantīm ājñāya sva-pāda-sparśanāśayā

sakhyopetyāgrahīt pāṇiṁ yo 'haṁ tad-gṛha-mārjanī

TRANSLATION

Śrī Kālindī said: The Lord knew I was performing severe austerities and penances with the hope of one day touching His lotus feet. So He came to me in the company of His friend and took my hand in marriage. Now I am engaged as a sweeper in His palace.

COMMENTARY

Kālindī said, "Kṛṣṇa approached me with His friend (*sakhya*) Arjuna."

|| 10.83.12 ||

śrī-mitravindovāca

yo māṁ svayaṁ-vara upetya vijitya bhū-pān

ninye śva-yūtha-gaṁ ivātma-baliṁ dvipāriḥ

bhrātṛṁś ca me 'pakurutaḥ sva-puraṁ śriyaukas

tasyāstu me 'nu-bhavam aṅghry-avanejanatvam

TRANSLATION

Śrī Mitravindā said: At my svayaṁ-vara ceremony He came forward, defeated all the kings present—including my brothers, who dared insult Him—and took me away just as a lion removes his prey from amidst a pack of dogs. Thus Lord Kṛṣṇa, the shelter of the goddess of fortune, brought me to His capital city. May I be allowed to serve Him by washing His feet, life after life.

COMMENTARY

Mitravindā said, “As a lion (*dvipa-ariḥ:siṁha*) takes his share from a pack of dogs, Kṛṣṇa defeated the kings and my offensive brothers and carried me, the abode of Lakṣmī (*śriyaukaḥ:Lakṣmī-nivāsaḥ*), off to His city. Life after life (*anu-bhavam:prati-janma*) may I attain the service of washing His lotus feet.”

|| 10.83.13-14 ||

śrī-satyovāca

saptokṣaṇo ’ti-bala-vīrya-su-tīkṣṇa-śṛṅgān

pitrā kṛtān kṣitipa-vīrya-parīkṣaṇāya

tān vīra-durmada-hanas tarasā nigṛhya

krīḍan babandha ha yathā śiśavo ’ja-tokān

ya itthaṁ vīrya-śulkāṁ māṁ dāsībhiś catur-angiṇīm

pathi nirjitya rājanyān ninye tad-dāsyam astu me

TRANSLATION

Śrī Satyā said: My father arranged for seven extremely powerful and vigorous bulls with deadly sharp horns to test the prowess of the kings who desired my hand in marriage. Although these bulls destroyed the false pride of many heroes, Lord Kṛṣṇa subdued them effortlessly, tying them up in the same way that children playfully tie up a goat’s kids. He thus purchased me with His valor. Then He took me away with my maidservants and a full army of four divisions, defeating all the kings who opposed Him along the road. May I be granted the privilege of serving that Lord.

COMMENTARY

Śrī Satyā said, “Seven strong bulls that had power, vitality and very sharp horns were arranged by my father for testing the prowess of the kings so that he could give me to the strongest suitor. Kṛṣṇa, however, destroyed the false pride of those heroes by quickly binding those bulls as easily as children tie up baby goats.

(Text 14) Having paid the price with His courage (*vīrya-sulkāṁ*), Kṛṣṇa took me to His city along with my maidservants and a full army consisting of four divisions: chariots, horses, elephants and infantry (*catuḥ-aṅgiṇīm*).”

|| 10.83.15-16 ||

śrī-bhadrovāca

pitā me mātuleyāya svayam āhūya dattavān

kṛṣṇe kṛṣṇāya tac-cittām akṣauhiṇyā sakhī-janaiḥ

asya me pāda-saṁsparśo bhavej janmani janmani

karmabhir bhrāmyamāṇāyā yena tac chreya ātmanaḥ

TRANSLATION

Śrī Bhadrā said: My dear Draupadī, of his own free will my father invited his nephew Kṛṣṇa, to whom I had already dedicated my heart, and offered me to Him as His bride. My father presented me to the Lord with an akṣauhiṇi military guard and a retinue of my female companions. My ultimate perfection is this: to always be allowed to touch Lord Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet as I wander from life to life, bound by my karma.

COMMENTARY

Queen Bhadrā said, "O Draupadī (*kṛṣṇe*), my father offered me to Kṛṣṇa, the son of my maternal uncle. [Bhadrā was the daughter of Jayasena and Rājādhidevī, the sister of Vasudeva.]

"Although I am rotating in the *saṁsāra* birth after birth due to my *karma* (*karmabhiḥ*), may I receive the touch of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet by which I will attain my ultimate perfection (*chreya ātmanaḥ*)." Since Bhadrā actually had no *karma*, this was merely an expression of her humility in playing the part of a human being.

|| 10.83.17 ||

śrī-lakṣmaṇovāca

mamāpi rājñy acyuta-janma-karma śrutvā muhur nārada-gītam āsa ha

cittaṁ mukunde kila padma-hastayā vṛtaḥ su-sammṛśya vihāya loka-pān

TRANSLATION

Śrī Lakṣmaṇā said: O Queen, I repeatedly heard Nārada Muni glorify the appearances and activities of Acyuta, and thus my heart also became attached to that Lord, Mukunda. Indeed, even Goddess Padmahastā chose Him as her husband after careful consideration, rejecting the great demigods who rule various planets.

COMMENTARY

Lakṣmaṇā said, “My heart became (*āsa ha*) attached to Mukunda. Therefore I, who carry a lotus in my hand, chose Mukunda after rejecting various planetary rulers.”

|| 10.83.18 ||

jñātvā mama mataṁ sādhvi pitā duhitṛ-vatsalaḥ

bṛhatsena iti khyātas tatropāyam acīkarat

TRANSLATION

My father, Bṛhatsena, was by nature compassionate to his daughter, and knowing how I felt, O saintly lady, he arranged to fulfill my desire.

|| 10.83.19 ||

yathā svayaṁ-vare rājñi matsyaḥ pārthepsayā kṛtaḥ

ayaṁ tu bahir ācchanno dṛśyate sa jale param

TRANSLATION

Just as a fish was used as a target in your svayaṁ-vara ceremony, O Queen, to assure that you would obtain Arjuna as your husband, so a fish was also used in my ceremony. In my case, however, it was concealed on all sides, and only its reflection could be seen in a pot of water below.

COMMENTARY

Lakṣmaṇā said, “A fish was also arranged for your (Draupadī) *svayaṁ-vara* wherein you had the desire of obtaining Arjuna (*pārthepsayā:arjuna-prāptīcchayā*).” In some editions of *Bhāgavatam* the word *pārthepsayā* is replaced by *pārtheṣv-apākṛtaḥ*, which means “struck by the arrows of Arjuna.”

“But” one may ask, “Why couldn’t Arjuna pierce the fish in Lakṣmaṇā’s case?”

Lakṣmaṇā answers saying, “In my case the fish, which was moving very quickly, could only be seen by looking at its reflection in a pot of water placed at the bottom of a pillar. It could not be seen by looking up. To shoot my target it was necessary to aim by looking up and down at the same time, an impossible feat for any mortal. Therefore only Kṛṣṇa could strike the target. But the fish arranged by your father, though covered, could be aimed at by looking straight up the pillar, and thus be pierced by the expert marksman Arjuna.”

|| 10.83.20 ||

śrutvaitat sarvato bhū-pā āyayur mat-pituḥ puram

sarvāstra-śastra-tattva-jñāḥ sopādhyāyāḥ sahasraśaḥ

TRANSLATION

Hearing of this, thousands of kings expert in shooting arrows and in wielding other weapons converged from all directions on my father's city, accompanied by their military teachers.

|| 10.83.21 ||

pitrā sampūjitāḥ sarve yathā-vīryaṁ yathā-vayaḥ

ādaduḥ sa-śaraṁ cāpaṁ veddhuṁ parṣadi mad-dhiyaḥ

TRANSLATION

My father properly honored each king according to his strength and seniority. Then those whose minds were fixed on me took up the bow and arrow and one by one tried to pierce the target in the midst of the assembly.

COMMENTARY

Lakṣmaṇā said, "Hoping to attain (*dhiyaḥ:prāpty-āsā*) me, the kings took up the bow and arrow in that assembly (*parṣadi*)."

|| 10.83.22 ||

ādāya vyasṛjan kecit sajyaṁ kartum anīśvarāḥ

ā-koṣṭhaṁ jyāṁ samutkṛṣya petur eke 'munāhatāḥ

TRANSLATION

Some of them picked up the bow but could not string it, and so they threw it aside in frustration. Some managed to pull the bowstring toward the tip of the bow, only to have the bow spring back and knock them to the ground.

COMMENTARY

Lakṣmaṇā said, "Some were able to pull the string to the tip of the bow, but being unable to tie it, they were hit by the bow and fell to the ground."

|| 10.83.23 ||

sajyaṁ kṛtvāpare vīrā māgadhāmbaṣṭha-cedipāḥ

bhīmo duryodhanaḥ karṇo nāvidaṁs tad-avasthitim

TRANSLATION

A few heroes—namely Jarāsandha, Śiśupāla, Bhīma, Duryodhana, Karṇa and the King of Ambaṣṭha—succeeded in stringing the bow, but none of them could find the target.

COMMENTARY

Lakṣmaṇā said, “Jarāsandha and other kings had the power to string the bow, but they were not skillful enough to find the target.”

|| 10.83.24 ||

matsyābhāsaṁ jale vīkṣya jñātvā ca tad-avasthitim

pārtho yatto ’sṛjad bāṇaṁ nācchinat paspṛśe param

TRANSLATION

Then Arjuna looked at the reflection of the fish in the water and determined its position. When he carefully shot his arrow at it, however, he did not pierce the target but merely grazed it.

COMMENTARY

Lakṣmaṇā said, “With great concentration Arjuna detected the target reflected (*ābhāsam*) in the water and carefully released his arrow, which touched the fish but did not pierce the center. This was known by seeing the arrow mark on the side of the fish.”

Some say that even though Arjuna was expert in the knowledge of finding targets, he could not pierce it because he lacked the strength.

|| 10.83.25-26 ||

rājanyeṣu nivṛtteṣu bhagna-māneṣu māniṣu

bhagavān dhanur ādāya sajyaṁ kṛtvātha līlayā

tasmin sandhāya viśikhaṁ matsyaṁ vīkṣya sakṛj jale

chittveṣuṇāpātayat taṁ sūrye cābhijiti sthite

TRANSLATION

After all the arrogant kings had given up, their pride broken, the Supreme Personality of Godhead picked up the bow, easily strung it and then fixed His arrow upon it. As the sun stood in the constellation Abhijit, He looked at the fish in the water only once and then pierced it with the arrow, knocking it to the ground.

COMMENTARY

Lakṣmaṇā said, “Kṛṣṇa pierced the fish at noon (*cābhijiti*), despite the fact that the fish was difficult to detect because the sun was overhead.” The lunar constellation Abhijit marks the period most auspicious for victory.

|| 10.83.27 ||

divi dundubhayo nedur jaya-śabda-yutā bhuvi

devāś ca kusumāsārān mumucur harṣa-vihvalāḥ

TRANSLATION

Kettledrums resounded in the sky, and on the earth people shouted “Jaya! Jaya!” Overjoyed, demigods showered flowers.

|| 10.83.28 ||

tad raṅgam āviśam ahaṁ kala-nūpurābhyāṁ

padbhyāṁ pragṛhya kanakoijvala-ratna-mālām

nūtne nivīya paridhāya ca kauśikāgrye

sa-vrīḍa-hāsa-vadanā kavarī-dhṛta-srak

TRANSLATION

Just then I walked onto the ceremonial ground, the ankle bells on my feet gently tinkling. I was wearing new garments of the finest silk, tied with a belt, and I carried a brilliant necklace fashioned of gold and jewels. There was a shy smile on my face and a wreath of flowers in my hair.

COMMENTARY

Remembering her joy on that occasion, Queen Lakṣmaṇā describes her choosing Kṛṣṇa at that time in two verses. She said, “I carried a brilliant necklace fashioned of gold and jewels. A belt was tied around my upper and lower garments, which were of excellent silk.”

|| 10.83.29 ||

unnīya vaktram uru-kuntala-kuṇḍala-tviḍ-

gaṇḍa-sthalaṁ śiśira-hāsa-kaṭākṣa-mokṣaiḥ

rājño nirīkṣya paritaḥ śanakair murārer

aṁse ’nurakta-hṛdayā nidadhe sva-mālām

TRANSLATION

I lifted my face, which was encircled by my abundant locks and effulgent from the glow of my earrings reflected from my cheeks. Smiling coolly, I glanced about. Then, looking around at all the kings, I slowly placed the necklace on the shoulder of Murāri, who had captured my heart.

COMMENTARY

Lakṣmaṇā said, “Due to the joy which arose in me at that time, my beauty underwent a transformation. My checks were illuminated by glittering earrings and abundant locks of hair hung near my ears.”

|| 10.83.30 ||

tāvan mṛdaṅga-paṭahāḥ śaṅkha-bhery-ānakādayaḥ

ninedur naṭa-nartakyo nanṛtur gāyakā jaguḥ

TRANSLATION

Just then there were loud sounds of conchshells and mṛdaṅga, paṭaha, bherī and ānaka drums, as well as other instruments. Men and women began to dance, and singers began to sing.

|| 10.83.31 ||

evaṁ vṛte bhagavati mayeśe nṛpa-yūthapāḥ

na sehire yājñaseni spardhanto hṛc-chayāturāḥ

TRANSLATION

The leading kings there could not tolerate my having chosen the Supreme Personality of Godhead, O Draupadī. Burning with lust, they became quarrelsome.

COMMENTARY

Lakṣmaṇā said, “O Draupadī (*yājñaseni*), when Kṛṣṇa was chosen by me the kings became quarrelsome (*spardhanto*).”

But, it may be asked, how is it that those who saw Kṛṣṇa’s supreme power became angry? Lakṣmaṇā answered by saying, “They were burning with lust (*hṛc-chayāturāḥ:kāmena*).” Thus it is implied that the contamination of lust caused the kings to quarrel foolishly with Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.83.32 ||

māṁ tāvad ratham āropya haya-ratna-catuṣṭayam

śārṅgam udyamya sannaddhas tasthāv ājau catur-bhujaḥ

TRANSLATION

The Lord then placed me on His chariot, drawn by four most excellent horses. Donning His armor and readying His bow Śārṅga, He stood on the chariot, and there on the battleground He manifested His four arms.

COMMENTARY

Lakṣmaṇā said, “Assuming four hands, Kṛṣṇa embraced me, who was very frightened, and with two arms He held His bow and arrows.”

|| 10.83.33 ||

dārukaś codayām āsa kāñcanopaskaraṁ ratham

miṣatāṁ bhū-bhujāṁ rājñi mṛgāṇāṁ mṛga-rāḍ iva

TRANSLATION

Dāruka drove the Lord’s gold-trimmed chariot as the kings looked on, O Queen, like small animals helplessly watching a lion.

COMMENTARY

Lakṣmaṇā said, “As animals watch a lion, the kings looked on while Kṛṣṇa went away.” Using the sixth case for *miṣatām* (watch) indicates Kṛṣṇa’s disregard for the kings.

|| 10.83.34 ||

te ’nvasajjanta rājanyā nişeddhuṁ pathi kecana

saṁyattā uddhṛteşv-āsā grāma-siṁhā yathā harim

TRANSLATION

The kings pursued the Lord like village dogs chasing a lion. Some kings, raising their bows, stationed themselves on the road to stop Him as He passed by.

COMMENTARY

The kings pursued Kṛṣṇa from behind (*anvasajjanta*) to stop Him, like dogs chasing a lion. Some went ahead, stationed themselves on the road, and lifted their bows (*uddhṛteşv-āsā*), just like dogs raising their tails (*āsā*).

|| 10.83.35 ||

te śārṅga-cyuta-bāṇaughaiḥ kṛtta-bāhv-aṅghri-kandharāḥ

nipetuḥ prādhāne kecid eke santyajya dudruvuḥ

TRANSLATION

These warriors were deluged by arrows shot from the Lord’s bow, Śārṅga. Some of the kings fell on the battlefield with severed arms, legs and necks; the rest gave up the fight and fled.

COMMENTARY

Some fell in the battlefield and others gave up (*santyajya*) and fled.

|| 10.83.36 ||

tataḥ purīṁ yadu-patir aty-alaṅkṛtāṁ ravi-cchada-dhvaja-paṭa-citra-toraṇām

kuśasthalīṁ divi bhuvi cābhisaṁstutāṁ samāviśat taraṇir iva sva-ketanam

TRANSLATION

The Lord of the Yadus then entered His capital city, Kuśasthalī [Dvārakā], which is glorified in heaven and on earth. The city was elaborately decorated with flagpoles carrying banners that blocked the sun, and also with splendid archways. As Lord Kṛṣṇa entered, He appeared like the sun-god entering his abode.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa entered Dvārakā which was decorated with wonderful arches and banners that blocked rays of the sun. The abode (*ketanam*) of the sun is in the western mountains where he sets each evening.

|| 10.83.37 ||

pitā me pūjayām āsa suhṛt-sambandhi-bāndhavān

mahārha-vāso-'laṅkāraiḥ śayyāsana-paricchadaiḥ

TRANSLATION

My father honored his friends, family and in-laws with priceless clothing and jewelry and with royal beds, thrones and other furnishings.

|| 10.83.38 ||

dāsībhiḥ sarva-sampadbhir bhaṭebha-ratha-vājibhiḥ

āyudhāni mahārhāṇi dadau pūrṇasya bhaktitaḥ

TRANSLATION

With devotion he presented the perfectly complete Lord with a number of maidservants bedecked with precious ornaments. Accompanying these maidservants were guards walking on foot and others riding elephants, chariots and horses. He also gave the Lord extremely valuable weapons.

COMMENTARY

Lakṣmaṇā said, "Out of love (*bhaktitaḥ*) my father gave priceless weapons along with female servants to the Lord, even though Kṛṣṇa is already perfect and complete (*pūrṇa*) in Himself. After all, Kṛṣṇa happily accepts even a small gift of flowers, *tulasī* leaves and water when it is offered in love."

|| 10.83.39 ||

ātmārāmasya tasyemā vayaṁ vai gṛha-dāsikāḥ

sarva-saṅga-nivṛttyāddhā tapasā ca babhūvima

TRANSLATION

Thus, by renouncing all material association and practicing austere penances, we queens have all become personal maidservants of the self-satisfied Supreme Lord.

COMMENTARY

Lakṣmaṇā felt embarrassed after describing profusely about herself in her state of absorption in Kṛṣṇa. Now, to satisfy her elders headed by Rukmiṇī, she spoke this verse praising her co-wives.

Lakṣmaṇā said, “We eight queens cannot control Kṛṣṇa like other wives can control their husbands.” She says this out of great humility. In fact, the queens of Dvārakā are direct expansions of Kṛṣṇa’s internal pleasure potency (*hlādinī-śakti*), and actually control Him with their *prema*.

|| 10.83.40 ||

mahiṣya ūcuḥ

bhaumaṁ nihatya sa-gaṇaṁ yudhi tena ruddhā

jñātvātha naḥ kṣiti-jaye jita-rāja-kanyāḥ

nirmucya saṁsṛti-vimokṣam anusmarantīḥ

pādāmbujaṁ pariṇināya ya āpta-kāmaḥ

TRANSLATION

Rohiṇī-devi, speaking for the other queens, said: After killing Bhaumāsura and his followers, the Lord found us in the demon’s prison and could understand that we were the daughters of the kings whom Bhauma had defeated during his conquest of the earth. The Lord set us free, and because we had been constantly meditating upon His lotus feet, the source of liberation from material entanglement, He agreed to marry us, though His every desire is already fulfilled.

COMMENTARY

Someone might say, “If Kṛṣṇa has accepted you as His wives, then certainly He fulfilled all your desires, as you have surrendered to His lotus feet.” The queens reply to this in this verse.

Rohiṇī-devī said, “Knowing us to be the imprisoned daughters of the kings who were defeated by Bhauma when he conquered the earth, Kṛṣṇa freed us after killing Bhauma. Although Kṛṣṇa is full in His desires (*āpta-kāmaḥ*), He kindly made us His

wives. We simply desire (*kāmayāmahe*) the dust of Kṛṣṇa's feet." [The verb *kāmayāmahe* appears in verse forty-two.]

Kṛṣṇa married the queens because they were constantly remembering His lotus feet (*anusmarantīḥ pādāmbujaṁ*), which give liberation from material life (*saṁsṛti-vimokṣam*). And for this reason also Kṛṣṇa freed them from the prison.

|| 10.83.41-42 ||

na vayaṁ sādhvi sāmrājyaṁ svārājyaṁ bhaujyam apy uta

vairājyaṁ pārameṣṭhyaṁ ca ānantyaṁ vā hareḥ padam

kāmayāmaha etasya śrīmat-pāda-rajaḥ śriyaḥ

kuca-kuṅkuma-gandhāḍhyaṁ mūrdhnā voḍhuṁ gadā-bhṛtaḥ

TRANSLATION

O saintly lady, we do not desire dominion over the earth, the sovereignty of the King of heaven, unlimited facility for enjoyment, mystic power, the position of Lord Brahmā, immortality or even attainment of the kingdom of God. We simply desire to carry on our heads the glorious dust of Lord Kṛṣṇa's feet, enriched by the fragrance of kuṅkuma from His consort's bosom.

COMMENTARY

The queens said, "We do not want lordship of the earth, of Indraloka (*svā rājyam*), nor the enjoyment of all material pleasures (*bhaujyam*) or mystic powers (*vividhaṁ virājate*), nor the position of Lord Brahmā (*pārameṣṭhyam*), nor immortality (*ānantyam*), nor any type of liberation such as living on the same planet as Hari (*hari padam*)."

"Then what do you desire?"

"We want the dust of Kṛṣṇa's (*etasya*) lotus feet, enriched with the fragrance of *kuṅkuma* from the breast of the goddess of fortune (*śriyaḥ*)."

The goddess of fortune mentioned here is not Lakṣmī, the consort of Nārāyaṇa. For Lakṣmī-devī also desired to attain Kṛṣṇa as stated by the wives of Kāliya: *yad-vāñchayā śrīr lalanācarat tapo*, "To attain the dust of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet the goddess of fortune performed austerities for centuries, giving up all other desires and taking austere vows." (SB 10.16.36) Uddhava has said: *nāyaṁ śriyo 'ṅga u nitānta-rateḥ prasādaḥ*, "The gopīs received benedictions from Kṛṣṇa that neither Lakṣmī-devī nor the most

beautiful dancers in the heavenly planets could attain." (SB 10.47.60) From this we can understand that Lakṣmī-devī never received that benediction.

|| 10.83.43 ||

vraja-striyo yad vāñchanti pulindyas tṛṇa-vīrudhaḥ

gāvaś cārayato gopāḥ pada-sparśaṁ mahātmanaḥ

TRANSLATION

We desire the same contact with the Supreme Lord's feet that the young women of Vraja, the cowherd boys and even the aborigine Pulinda women desire—the touch of the dust He leaves on the plants and grass as He tends His cows.

COMMENTARY

Śrī in the word *śrīyaḥ* (verse 42) cannot refer to Rukmiṇī either. The present verse says that the women of Vraja (*vraja-striyo*) also desire the dust of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. Once the Vraja-gopīs confessed their anxiety to Uddhava: *kasmāt kṛṣṇa ihāyāti prāpta-rājyo hatāhitaḥ narendra-kanyā udvāhya***,** "Why should Kṛṣṇa come back here after winning a kingdom, killing His enemies and marrying the daughters of kings?" (SB 10.47.45) The gopīs said this with envy towards Rukmiṇī and the other queens who are their competitors for Kṛṣṇa's love. Thus, the gopīs could not desire anything related to Rukmiṇī. The *Śrī* referred to here is none other than Śrīmati Rādhikā, the supreme goddess of fortune identified by the *Bṛhad-gautamīya-tantra*:

> *devī kṛṣṇa-mayī proktā rādhikā para-devatā*
>
> *sarva-lakṣmī-mayī sarva kāntiḥ sammohinī parā*
>
> "The transcendental goddess Rādhikā is the direct counterpart of Kṛṣṇa. Rādhā contains within Her all the goddesses of fortune. Rādhikā possesses all the attractiveness to attract Śrī Kṛṣṇa, reality the beautiful. Śrīmati Rādhikā is the primeval internal potency of Śrī Kṛṣṇa."

The queens of Dvārakā said, "The intimate girlfriends of Rādhā desire to touch the dust of Kṛṣṇa's feet, which is enriched with the fragrance of the *kuṅkuma* from Śrī Rādhā's beautiful breasts. Even the aborigine women of Vṛndāvana (Pulindas) also desire this reddish powder when they see it smeared on the grass and plants (*tṛṇa-vīrudhaḥ*) as stated by the phrase (*tṛṇa-rūṣitena*) in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*: (10.21.17).

“While Kṛṣṇa tends the cows (*gāvaś*) His intimate cowherd boyfriends (*priya-narma-sakhas*) also desire this dust. Some boys like Subala, having thoughts of attaining sentiments like the gopīs, not only desire it but they also want to be directly touched by Kṛṣṇa’s feet as described here by the word (*pada-sparśaṁ*). Therefore, we queens of Dvārakā also hanker for this.”

The word *pada-sparśaṁ* (touch of the feet) can also be a modifier of the word *pāda-rajaḥ* in verse 42 which means foot dust. Thus the meaning would be: “The gopīs desire the dust which touches Kṛṣṇa’s feet.”

The eight principal queens headed by Rukmiṇī felt so fortunate and satisfied in their relationship with Kṛṣṇa in Dvārakā that they had no desire to attain the dust of His feet. However, the sixteen thousand lesser queens, after meeting Uddhava in a secluded place and hearing about the *prema-rasa* of Vraja, became very attracted to touching the dust that falls from Kṛṣṇa’s feet onto the grass and plants of Vṛndāvana. These queens became especially eager after hearing about the superexcellent quality of Śrī Rādhā’s beauty, character, loving devotion, good fortune and sweetness by which She brings Śrī Kṛṣṇa under Her control.

Thus some commentators give this as the reason why, after the *mauṣala-līlā* (Kṛṣṇa’s disappearance pastime), these sixteen thousand queens were stolen from Arjuna on the road by Kṛṣṇa Himself in the disguise of sixteen thousand cowherds, who then took them away to Gokula.

Thus ends the commentary on the Eighty-third Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Eighty-four

The Sages' Teachings at Kuruksetra

|| 10.84.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

śrutvā pṛthā subala-putry atha yājñasenī

mādhavy atha kṣitipa-patnya uta sva-gopyaḥ

kṛṣṇe 'khilātmani harau praṇayānubandhaṁ

sarvā visismyur alam aśru-kalākulākṣyaḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Pṛthā, Gāndhārī, Draupadī, Subhadrā, the wives of other kings and the Lord's cowherd girlfriends were all amazed to hear of the queens' deep love for Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead and Soul of all beings, and their eyes filled with tears.

COMMENTARY

In this chapter Kṛṣṇa and the sages praise one another, Vasudeva asks questions and performs sacrifices, and Nanda Mahārāja departs for Vraja.

Though Gāndhārī (*subala-putry*), Draupadī (*yājñasenī*) and Subhadrā (*mādhavy*) all heard the discussions of the queens, those such as Gāndhārī did not hear directly since it would have been inappropriate in their presence for Draupadī and Kṛṣṇa's queens to have freely indulged in such joking, questions and answers. However, Draupadī and Subhadrā were intimate friends of the same age as the queens, so it was proper that they heard directly. The Vraja-gopīs, whose attitude toward the queens of Dvārakā was not particularly sympathetic, heard even more indirectly. The word (*uta*) indicates this separation of distance.

By the word *sva* in *sva-gopyaḥ* (own gopīs) we can understand that because the Vraja-gopīs identified themselves as Kṛṣṇa's intimate associates, they normally would have gone off secretly each night to enjoy with Kṛṣṇa in pastimes of conjugal pleasure. But since Kurukṣetra is a holy place of pilgrimage, one should understand that the Vraja-gopīs were obliged to observe celibacy and did not engage in such activities. The *gopīs* were also astonished and shed tears (*aśru*) on hearing the queens' pastimes because they were reminded of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. The gopīs saw there a very slight similarity to their own emotions. But we should not think that there was any loving affinity (*anurāga*) shared between the queens of Dvārakā and the Vraja-gopīs.

|| 10.84.2-5 ||

iti sambhāṣamāṇāsu strībhiḥ strīṣu nṛbhir nṛṣu

āyayur munayas tatra kṛṣṇa-rāma-didṛkṣayā

dvaipāyano nāradaś ca cyavano devalo 'sitaḥ

viśvāmitraḥ śatānando bharadvājo 'tha gautamaḥ

rāmaḥ sa-śiṣyo bhagavān vasiṣṭho gālavo bhṛguḥ

pulastyaḥ kaśyapo 'triś ca mārkaṇḍeyo bṛhaspatiḥ

dvitas tritaś caikataś ca brahma-putrās tathāṅgirāḥ

agastyo yājñavalkyaś ca vāmadevādayo 'pare

TRANSLATION

As the women thus talked among themselves and the men among themselves, a number of great sages arrived there, all of them eager to see Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Balarāma. They included Dvaipāyana, Nārada, Cyavana, Devala and Asita, Viśvāmitra, Śatānanda, Bharadvāja and Gautama, Lord Paraśurāma and his disciples, Vasiṣṭha, Gālava, Bhṛgu, Pulastya and Kaśyapa, Atri, Mārkaṇḍeya and Bṛhaspati, Dvita, Trita, Ekata and the four Kumāras, and Aṅgirā, Agastya, Yājñavalkya and Vāmadeva.

COMMENTARY

While the men were talking to the men and the women were conversing with the women, the *munis* came to see Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.84.6 ||

tān dṛṣṭvā sahasotthāya prāg āsīnā nṛpādayaḥ

pāṇḍavāḥ kṛṣṇa-rāmau ca praṇemur viśva-vanditān

TRANSLATION

As soon as they saw the sages approaching, the kings and other gentlemen who had been seated immediately stood up, including the Pāṇḍava brothers and Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. They all then bowed down to the sages, who are honored throughout the universe.

|| 10.84.7 ||

tān ānarcur yathā sarve saha-rāmo 'cyuto 'rcayat

svāgatāsana-pādyārghya-mālya-dhūpānulepanaiḥ

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa, Lord Balarāma and the other kings and leaders properly worshiped the sages by offering them words of greeting, sitting places, water for washing their feet, drinking water, flower garlands, incense and sandalwood paste.

|| 10.84.8 ||

uvāca sukham āsīnān bhagavān dharma-gup-tanuḥ

sadasas tasya mahato yata-vāco 'nuśṛṇvataḥ

TRANSLATION

After the sages were comfortably seated, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, whose transcendental body protects religious principles, addressed them in the midst of that great assembly. Everyone listened silently with rapt attention.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa sat in the assembly (*sadasaḥ:sadasi*) of sages and began speaking. The use of the genitive case in the word *sadasaḥ* is with the meaning of the locative case.

|| 10.84.9 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

aho vayaṁ janma-bhṛto labdhaṁ kārtsnyena tat-phalam

devānām api duṣprāpaṁ yad yogeśvara-darśanam

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord said: Now our lives are indeed successful, for we have obtained life's ultimate goal: the audience of great yoga masters, which even demigods only rarely obtain.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, "Now Our birth has become successful (*janma-bhṛtaḥ*), for We are seeing the masters of *yoga*, which is rare even for the demigods, what to speak of humans."

|| 10.84.10 ||

kiṁ svalpa-tapasāṁ nṝṇām arcāyāṁ deva-cakṣuṣām

darśana-sparśana-praśna-prahva-pādārcanādikam

TRANSLATION

How is it that people who are not very austere and who recognize God only in His Deity form in the temple can now see you, touch you, inquire from you, bow down to you, worship your feet and serve you in other ways?

COMMENTARY

Verse eight mentioned Kṛṣṇa as the protector of religion (*dharma-gup-tanuḥ*). Beginning with verse nine, Kṛṣṇa's words illustrate His upholding of *dharma* by praising the sages as if He were an ordinary human being.

Kṛṣṇa said, "For men of little intelligence who see God only in the Deity form, and not in you saintly persons, it is your mercy alone that they get the opportunity to see you."

|| 10.84.11 ||

na hy am-mayāni tīrthāni na devā mṛc-chilā-mayāḥ

te punanty uru-kālena darśanād eva sādhavaḥ

TRANSLATION

Mere bodies of water are not the real sacred places of pilgrimage, nor are mere images of earth and stone the true worshipable deities. These purify one only after a long time, but saintly sages purify one immediately upon being seen.

|| 10.84.12 ||

nāgnir na sūryo na ca candra-tārakā

na bhūr jalaṁ khaṁ śvasano ’tha vāṅ manaḥ

upāsitā bheda-kṛto haranty aghaṁ

vipaścito ghnanti muhūrta-sevayā

TRANSLATION

Neither the demigods controlling fire, the sun, the moon and the stars nor those in charge of earth, water, ether, air, speech and mind actually remove the sins of their worshipers, who continue to see in terms of dualities. But wise sages destroy one’s sins when respectfully served for even a few moments.

COMMENTARY

That speech and the mind are also not fit objects of worship is stated in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (7.2.13): *yo vācaṁ brahmety upāste mano brahmety upāste*, “He who worship the voice as Brahman is free to speak as he wishes within the realms reached by speech,” and “He who worships the mind as Brahman is free to act in the realms reached by the mind.”

Kṛṣṇa said, “One who sees difference (*bheda-kṛto*) between himself and others, who are actually similar, because of urges like hunger, thirst, and the desire for honor cannot destroy his sins (*aghaṁ*) such as envy, disrespect, and contempt arising from seeing difference by such worship. But he can destroy those sins by serving great devotees.”

|| 10.84.13 ||

yasyātma-buddhiḥ kuṇape tri-dhātuke sva-dhīḥ kalatrādiṣu bhauma ijya-dhīḥ

yat-tīrtha-buddhiḥ salile na karhicij janeṣv abhijñeṣu sa eva go-kharaḥ

TRANSLATION

One who identifies his self as the inert body composed of mucus, bile and air, who assumes his wife and family are permanently his own, who thinks an earthen image or the land of his birth is worshipable, or who sees a place of pilgrimage as merely the water there, but who never identifies himself with, feels kinship with, worships or even visits those who are wise in spiritual truth —such a person is no better than a cow or an ass.

COMMENTARY

This verse states that one who avoids saintly persons and instead identifies his self with other objects is very foolish.

Kṛṣṇa said, “He who thinks that the corpselike body (*kuṇape*), composed of mucus, bile and air (*tridhātuke*) is the object of love (*ātmā*), who thinks that his wife and children are his own (*sva-dhīḥ*), or that images made of earth (*bhauma*) are worthy of worship (*ijya dhīḥ*), and who sees a holy place (*tīrtha buddhiḥ*) as merely the water there, but never associates with self-realized (*abhijñeṣu*) men is equal to a cow or an ass (*go-kharaḥ*).”

Cows and asses are classed as one object because of their similarity. Or *go-kharaḥ* can mean the asses that carry grass and other items for the service of cows. In the *Bṛhaspati-saṁhitā*, it is said:

ajñāta-bhagavad-dharmā mantra-vijñāna-saṁvidaḥ

narās te go-khara jñeyā api bhū-pāla-vanditāḥ

> “Men who are expert in Vedic mantras but do not know about *bhāgavata-dharma* are known as cows and asses even if they are worshiped by kings.”

From the statement “those who identify with the body (*yasyātma-buddhiḥ*) and not with wise men” (*janeṣv abhijñeṣu*), one can conclude that those who identify with both the body and with wise men are not cows and asses. However, those who identify themselves only with wise men and consider them sacred and worthy of worship are the most excellent of all. The phrase *bhauma ijya-dhīḥ*, “who thinks an image made of earth is worshipable,” refers not to the Deity form of Kṛṣṇa but to deities of demigods. In this regard, the Eleventh Canto states:

arcāyām eva haraye pūjāṁ yaḥ śraddhayehate

na tad-bhakteṣu cānyeṣu sa bhaktaḥ prākṛtaḥ smṛtaḥ

> “A devotee who faithfully engages in Deity worship but does not behave properly toward other devotees or people in general is called a *prākṛta-bhakta*, or *kaniṣṭha-adhikāri*, a materialistic devotee, and is considered to be in the lowest position.” (SB 11.2.47)

Such persons who worship Kṛṣṇa but not His devotees are said to be *kaniṣṭha-bhaktas* and not cows or asses (*go-kharaḥ*). Similarly, the phrase *yat-tīrtha-buddhiḥ salile*, “who sees a place of pilgrimage as merely the water there,” refers not to sacred rivers

like the Ganges or Yamunā but to lesser rivers. There are thousands of authoritative statements in the scriptures to prove this.

|| 10.84.14 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

niśamyetthaṁ bhagavataḥ kṛṣṇasyākuṇṭha-medhasaḥ

vaco duranvayaṁ viprās tūṣṇīm āsan bhramad-dhiyaḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Hearing such unfathomable words from the unlimitedly wise Lord Kṛṣṇa, the learned brāhmaṇas remained silent, their minds bewildered.

COMMENTARY

Hearing those inscrutable (*duranvayam*) words of Kṛṣṇa (starting with verse nine), which were so uncharacteristic of the Lord, the sages remained silent.

|| 10.84.15 ||

ciraṁ vimṛśya munaya īśvarasyeśitavyatām

jana-saṅgraha ity ūcuḥ smayantas taṁ jagad-gurum

TRANSLATION

For some time the sages pondered the Supreme Lord's behavior, which resembled that of a subordinate living being. They concluded that He was acting this way to instruct the people in general. Thus they smiled and spoke to Him, the spiritual master of the universe.

COMMENTARY

After considering Kṛṣṇa's statement that He was subservient (*īsvarasyeśitavyatām*) to them, the sages could not see any logic in His words. Therefore they explained that Kṛṣṇa's words and actions were for enlightening the common man (*jana saṅgraha*) since He is the supreme teacher (*jagad-gurum*) of spiritual surrender.

|| 10.84.16 ||

śrī-munaya ūcuḥ

yan-māyayā tattva-vid-uttamā vayaṁ vimohitā viśva-sṛjām adhīśvarāḥ

yad īśitavyāyati gūḍha īhayā aho vicitram bhagavad-viceṣṭitam

TRANSLATION

The great sages said: Your power of illusion has totally bewildered us, the most exalted knowers of the truth and leaders among the universal creators. Ah, how amazing is the behavior of the Supreme Lord! He covers Himself with His humanlike activities and pretends to be subject to superior control.

COMMENTARY

The sages said, "Although You are none other than the Supreme Lord, You act as if You were a controlled living entity, hidden by Your human-like behavior. Such pastimes result in Your being supremely glorified (*bhaga-vat:parama-yaṣas-karam*)." The *Amara-kośa* dictionary says: *bhagam śri-kāma-māhātmya-vīrya-yatnārka-kīrtiṣu*, "*Bhaga* means wealth, desire, glory, courage, endeavor, fame and the sun."

|| 10.84.17 ||

anīha etad bahudhaika ātmanā sṛjaty avaty atti na badhyate yathā

bhaumair hi bhūmir bahu-nāma-rūpiṇī aho vibhūmnaś caritaṁ viḍambanam

TRANSLATION

Indeed, the humanlike pastimes of the Almighty are simply a pretense! Effortlessly, He alone sends forth from His Self this variegated creation, maintains it and then swallows it up again, all without becoming entangled, just as the element earth takes on many names and forms in its various transformations.

COMMENTARY

The sages said, "Your displaying and hiding Your powers are beyond comprehension. By Yourself (*ātmanā:svenaiva*) You create this variegated universe, yet You are not bound. Although one, You become the universe, appearing with many names and forms, as the element earth, although one becomes many by its various transformations of pots and cloths. Ah, how amazing it is that You, the perfectly complete Personality of Godhead, engage in the pastime of worshiping the *brāhmaṇas*, imitating ordinary persons' activities in the material world. Thus You simply pretend to be under higher control."

|| 10.84.18 ||

athāpi kāle sva-janābhiguptaye bibharṣi sattvaṁ khala-nigrahāya ca

sva-līlayā veda-pathaṁ sanātanaṁ varṇāśramātmā puruṣaḥ paro bhavān

TRANSLATION

Nonetheless, at suitable times You assume the pure mode of goodness to protect Your devotees and punish the wicked. Thus You, the Soul of the varṇāśrama social order, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, maintain the eternal path of the Vedas by enjoying Your pleasure pastimes.

COMMENTARY

In three verses the sages explain how Kṛṣṇa puts on the pretense of imitating ordinary behavior in order to protect the devotees, destroy the demons and establish *dharma*.

The sages said, “Nonetheless, even though You are the perfectly complete Personality of Godhead, You manifest a form of pure goodness (*bibharṣi sattvaṁ:viśuddha-sattva*), and uphold the eternal path of the *Vedas* by Your own behavior (*sva-līlayā*). You do this by instituting the divine system of occupational and spiritual divisions of society (*varṇāśrama*). But still You remain the Supreme Personality of Godhead, which is the topmost (*puruṣaḥ paro*) among all the different forms that You manifest.”

|| 10.84.19 ||

brahma te hṛdayaṁ śuklaṁ tapaḥ-svādhyāya-saṁyamaiḥ

yatropalabdhaṁ sad vyaktam avyaktaṁ ca tataḥ param

TRANSLATION

The Vedas are Your spotless heart, and through them one can per-ceive—by means of austerity, study and self-control—the manifest, the unmanifest and the pure existence transcendental to both.

COMMENTARY

The sages said, “You follow the path of the *Vedas* because the *Vedas* are very dear to You. The pure (*suklaṁ*) *Vedas* (*brahma*) are Your heart in which the unmanifest, subtle causes of creation (*avyaktaṁ*), the manifest products of material creation (*vyaktam*) and existence itself, Brahman (*param*), are realized through austerity, study and sense control.”

|| 10.84.20 ||

tasmād brahmā-kulaṁ brahman śāstra-yones tvam ātmanaḥ

sabhājayasi sad dhāma tad brahmaṇyāgraṇīr bhavān

TRANSLATION

Therefore, O Supreme Brahman, You honor the members of the brahminical community, for they are the perfect agents by which one can realize You through the evidence of the Vedas. For that very reason You are the foremost worshiper of the brāhmaṇas.

COMMENTARY

The sages said, "Therefore, because the Vedas are Your heart. You fully worship (*sabhājayasi:sampūjayasi*) the community of *brāhmaṇas* who distribute the *Vedas*, and who are the best source of realization (*sad dhāma:śreṣṭha-uplabdhi-sthānam*) of Yourself (*ātmanaḥ*) who are known by the *Vedas* (*sāstra-yones:veda-pramāṇakasya*). For that very reason (*tad:tasmād eva kāraṇāt*), You are the foremost (*āgraṇīr:mukhyaḥ*) worshipper of the *brāhmaṇas* and always engage Yourself in pure activities."

|| 10.84.21 ||

adya no janma-sāphalyaṁ vidyāyās tapaso dṛśaḥ

tvayā saṅgamya sad-gatyā yad antaḥ śreyasāṁ paraḥ

TRANSLATION

Today our birth, education, austerity and vision have all become perfect because we have been able to associate with You, the goal of all saintly persons. Indeed, You Yourself are the ultimate, supreme blessing.

COMMENTARY

The sages said, "Our vision, knowledge and austerity have become successful today by attaining association with You, the very form of the ultimate goal (*sad-gatyā:sad-gati-svarūpena*), because You are the ultimate limit (*antaḥ:sīmā*) of auspiciousness (*śreyasāṁ paraḥ*)."

|| 10.84.22 ||

namas tasmai bhagavate kṛṣṇāyākuṇṭha-medhase

sva-yogamāyayācchanna-mahimne paramātmane

TRANSLATION

Let us offer obeisances unto that Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the infinitely intelligent Supersoul, who has disguised His greatness through His mystic Yogamāyā.

COMMENTARY

“Therefore You may praise or offer respects to us to teach the common man, but we must bow down to You, our worshipable Lord.” Thus the sages offer their obeisances in this verse.

|| 10.84.23 ||

na yaṁ vidanty amī bhū-pā ekārāmāś ca vṛṣṇayaḥ

māyā-javanikācchannam ātmānaṁ kālam īśvaram

TRANSLATION

Neither these kings nor even the Vṛṣṇis, who enjoy Your intimate association, know You as the Soul of all existence, the force of time and the supreme controller. For them You are covered by the curtain of Māyā.

COMMENTARY

The sages said, “The Vṛṣṇis, whom You enjoyed intimately with in sitting and resting, did not realize that You are the Supersoul residing in the heart of every created being. And the kings at Kurukṣetra who were not Your devotees could not recognize You as time, the annihilator of everything. Why is this? The curtain of *māyā* covered their knowledge.”

It should be concluded however that it was material ignorance (*mahāmāyā*) which covered the kings. But for the Vṛṣṇis it was the internal spiritual potency, *yogamāyā*, which covered their awareness of Kṛṣṇa’s majesty and engaged them in His eternal pleasure pastimes.

|| 10.84.24-25 ||

yathā śayānaḥ puruṣa ātmānaṁ guṇa-tattva-dṛk

nāma-mātrendriyābhātaṁ na veda rahitaṁ param

evaṁ tvā nāma-mātreṣu viṣayeṣv indriyehayā

māyayā vibhramac-citto na veda smṛty-upaplavāt

TRANSLATION

A sleeping person imagines an alternative reality for himself and, seeing himself as having various names and forms, forgets his waking identity, which is distinct from the dream. Similarly, the senses of one whose consciousness is bewildered by illusion perceive only the names and forms of material objects. Thus such a person loses his memory and cannot know You.

COMMENTARY

"Furthermore, this universe, comprised of many names and forms, is actually You alone, though You are transcendental to it. But the common people do not know this." In two verses the sages explain this with an analogy.

A sleeping person sees the objects in a dream as reality and is aware of the names and forms (*mātra:rūpādi*) of a tiger, snake and a king which are manifest by the sense of hearing. But he does not know himself who has become those forms; rather he identifies himself as something other than his real form. Similarly, the ignorant man, bewildered by *māyā* through the action of his senses like the ear, knows You by the names of *deva* or man having a material form and qualities. This is explained using an example in two verses.

Similarly, a person sees the designations and forms of demigods and humans as real because his consciousness, from which originate the activities of his senses of hearing and perception, is bewildered by *māyā*. Because His intelligence is covered (*smṛty-upaplavāt:viveka-dhvaṁsāt*) he does not know Your true form, which is separate and distinct (*rahitaṁ:bhinnam*) from the many names and forms that You assume as the embodiment of the universe.

|| 10.84.26 ||

tasyādya te dadṛśimāṅghrim aghaugha-marṣa-

tīrthāspadaṁ hṛdi kṛtaṁ su-vipakva-yogaiḥ

utsikta-bhakty-upahatāśaya jīva-kośā

āpur bhavad-gatim athānugṛhāna bhaktān

TRANSLATION

Today we have directly seen Your feet, the source of the holy Ganges, which washes away volumes of sins. Perfected yogīs can at best meditate upon Your feet within their hearts. But only those who render You wholehearted

devotional service and in this way vanquish the soul's covering—the material mind—attain You as their final destination. Therefore kindly show mercy to us, Your devotees.

COMMENTARY

The sages said, "Though explaining this knowledge, we are Your devotees, since without devotion it would have been impossible to see You in this way. We see Your lotus feet, which are the shelter of holy places like the Gaṅgā which destroy (*marṣa*) all sins (*agha*). Even great *yogis* advanced in meditation can only see Your lotus feet in their hearts. They cannot see You directly."

Kṛṣṇa may object, "That may be, but one must resort to *jñāna* in order to destroy the subtle body."

The sages reply, "Only those yogīs who have destroyed their material mind and ego (*jīva-kośā*) by intense devotion to You can attain perfection in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Therefore please be merciful to us and accept us as Your devotees."

|| 10.84.27 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

ity anujñāpya dāśārhaṁ dhṛtarāṣṭraṁ yudhiṣṭhiram

rājarṣe svāśramān gantuṁ munayo dadhire manaḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having thus spoken, O wise king, the sages then took leave of Lord Dāśārha, Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Yudhiṣṭhira and prepared to depart for their āśramas.

|| 10.84.28 ||

tad vīkṣya tān upavrajya vasudevo mahā-yaśāḥ

praṇamya copasaṅgṛhya babhāṣedaṁ su-yantritaḥ

TRANSLATION

Seeing that they were about to leave, the renowned Vasudeva approached the sages. After bowing down to them and touching their feet, he spoke to them with carefully chosen words.

COMMENTARY

Grasping their feet, Vasudeva spoke. The *sandhi* of *babhāṣe* with *idaṁ* (*babhāṣedaṁ*) is poetic license. Vasudeva thought, “Such sages are difficult to bring, even if invited. Without their help, I will never be able to destroy the doubts in my heart. Therefore now I should ask some questions to keep them from leaving.”

|| 10.84.29 ||

śrī-vasudeva uvāca

namo vaḥ sarva-devebhya ṛṣayaḥ śrotum arhatha

karmaṇā karma-nirhāro yathā syān nas tad ucyatām

TRANSLATION

Śrī Vasudeva said: Obeisances to you, the residence of all the demigods. Please hear me, O sages. Kindly tell us how the reactions of one’s work can be counteracted by further work.

COMMENTARY

Here Vasudeva addresses the sages as *sarva-devebhya*, “the residence of all the demigods.” His statement is confirmed in the *śrutis*, which declare, *yāvatīr vai devatās tāḥ sarvā veda-vidi brāhmaṇe vasanti*: “All the demigods reside in a *brāhmaṇa* who knows the *Vedas*.”

Vasudeva said, “Please tell me how I can destroy the bondage of *karma*? Since I am so attached to my wives, children and home, I am not qualified for *jñāna* or *bhakti*.”

|| 10.84.30 ||

śrī-nārada uvāca

nāti-citram idaṁ viprā vasudevo bubhutsayā

kṛṣṇam matvārbhakaṁ yan naḥ pṛcchati śreya ātmanaḥ

TRANSLATION

Śrī Nārada Muni said: O brāhmaṇas, it is not so amazing that in his eagerness to know, Vasudeva has asked us about his ultimate benefit, for he considers Kṛṣṇa a mere boy.

COMMENTARY

The sages, feeling astonished, said “Ah, even though Vasudeva is the Lord’s father, he thinks himself caught up in the cycle of material existence. And even if he is asking for the benefit of others, why is he ignoring Kṛṣṇa and asking us?”

Nārada Muni answers them in this verse: “It is not surprising that Vasudeva, thinking of Kṛṣṇa as his son (*arbhakam*) and not the Lord, asks us about his ultimate good, *śreya ātmanaḥ*.”

|| 10.84.31 ||

sannikarṣo ’tra martyānām anādaraṇa-kāraṇam

gāṅgaṁ hitvā yathānyāmbhas tatratyo yāti śuddhaye

TRANSLATION

In this world familiarity breeds contempt. For example, one who lives on the banks of the Ganges might travel to some other body of water to be purified.

COMMENTARY

Indeed, Vasudeva knew that Kṛṣṇa was the Lord from His very birth, but living close to Him bred familiarity. That is expressed in this verse. Nārada knew that the cause of Vasudeva not seeing Kṛṣṇa as God was Vasudeva’s prema, but still at that great gathering Nārada explained things according to the common man’s level in order to maintain the extreme confidentiality of the highest truths about pure love of God, *prema-siddhānta*. It is certain that hearing this verse from Nārada would increase Vasudeva’s respect for Kṛṣṇa as the Lord. In this context the word *anādara* means “disregarding greatness.”

|| 10.84.32-33 ||

yasyānubhūtiḥ kālena layotpatty-ādināsya vai

svato ’nyasmāc ca guṇato na kutaścana riṣyati

taṁ kleśa-karma-paripāka-guṇa-pravāhair

avyāhatānubhavam īśvaram advitīyam

prāṇādibhiḥ sva-vibhavair upagūḍham anyo

manyeta sūryam iva megha-himoparāgaiḥ

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord’s awareness is never disturbed by time, by the creation and destruction of the universe, by changes in its own qualities, or by anything else, whether self-caused or external. But although the consciousness of the Personality of Godhead, who is the supreme one without a second, is never affected by material distress, by the reactions of material work or by the

constant flow of nature's modes, ordinary persons nonetheless think that the Lord is covered by His own creations of prāṇa and other material elements, just as one may think that the sun is covered by clouds, snow or an eclipse.

COMMENTARY

Nārada said, "O most venerable *brāhmaṇas*, not only Vasudeva is subject to this criticism. Almost all the people here do not know that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Lord." This is explained in two verses.

"Materialistic people think that Kṛṣṇa, whose knowledge is never destroyed by any cause, can be covered by *prāṇa* and other elements just like themselves." The verb is found in the second verse.

"Kṛṣṇa's knowledge cannot be destroyed by time which causes the creation and destruction of the universe as in the case of a *karkaṭīkā* fruit which grows and decays. Kṛṣṇa's knowledge is not destroyed by itself like lightning; or by any means other than Himself like a hammer which destroys a clay pot; or by the mode of ignorance which destroys the universe."

(Text 33) Nārada repeats the same idea to strengthen his statement in this verse. "Kṛṣṇa's consciousness (*anubhavam*) is never destroyed by the afflictions (*kleśa*) of attachment, by the *karmas* which caused these afflictions, by the consequent (*paripāka*) happiness and distress which are the by-products of *karma*, nor by the constant flow of the three modes (*guṇa*). But ignorant men think that Kṛṣṇa, who appears to be covered by His own expansions (*sva-vibhavair*) of the subtle body made of *prana*, mind, intelligence, to be a person like themselves. This can be compared to the sun, which appears covered by its own products in the form of clouds, snow (*hima*) or the eclipses (*uparāgaiḥ*) of Rāhu. In reality the sun is the cause of the cloud because the cloud is made of water, which comes from light (*tejas*) in the original process of elemental creation. Water is the cause of snow. Rāhu is made from the sun's light because his nature is to destroy the darkness of the misfortunes of wicked persons, and because darkness is perceived by the sense of sight."

|| 10.84.34 ||

athocur munayo rājann ābhāṣyānalsadundabhim

sarveṣāṁ śṛṇvatāṁ rājñāṁ tathaivācyuta-rāmayoḥ

TRANSLATION

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] The sages then spoke again, O King, addressing Vasudeva while all the kings, along with Lord Acyuta and Lord Rāma, listened.

COMMENTARY

The sages spoke again to Vasudeva while Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma and the kings listened.

|| 10.84.35 ||

karmaṇā karma-nirhāra eṣa sādhu-nirūpitaḥ

yac chraddhayā yajed viṣṇuṁ sarva-yajñeśvaraṁ makhaiḥ

TRANSLATION

[The sages said:] It has been definitely concluded that work is counteracted by further work when one executes Vedic sacrifices as a means of worshiping Viṣṇu, the Lord of all sacrifices, with sincere faith.

COMMENTARY

In this verse the sages reply to Vasudeva's question about eliminating *karma*. Without understanding that fire sacrifices are meant for worshiping Viṣṇu, it is not possible to eradicate *karma*.

|| 10.84.36 ||

cittasyopaśamo 'yaṁ vai kavibhiḥ śāstra-cakṣusā

darśitaḥ su-gamo yogo dharmaś cātma-mud-āvahaḥ

TRANSLATION

Learned authorities who see through the eye of scripture have demonstrated that this is the easiest method of subduing the agitated mind and attaining liberation, and that it is a sacred duty which brings joy to the heart.

COMMENTARY

The sages said, "The worship of Viṣṇu pacifies the heart (*cittasyopaśamo*), and it is easily performed (*sugamo*) because it is based on material inclinations. It is both liberation (*yogo*) and *dharma*, sacred duty, in the sense that it is obligatory, because otherwise one would incur contamination due to not doing what is prescribed. And it pleases the mind (*ātma-mud-āvahaḥ*)."

|| 10.84.37 ||

ayaṁ svasty-ayanaḥ panthā dvi-jāter gṛha-medhinaḥ

yac chraddhayāpta-vittena śuklenejyeta pūruṣaḥ

TRANSLATION

This is the most auspicious path for a religious householder of the twice-born orders—to selflessly worship the Personality of Godhead with wealth honestly obtained.

COMMENTARY

"Purely obtained wealth" (*āpta-vittena śuklene*) means lawfully obtained through the occupations of the three higher castes.

|| 10.84.38 ||

vittaiṣaṇāṁ yajña-dānair gṛhair dāra-sutaiṣaṇām

ātma-lokaiṣaṇāṁ deva kālena visṛjed budhaḥ

grāme tyaktaiṣaṇāḥ sarve yayur dhīrās tapo-vanam

TRANSLATION

An intelligent person should learn to renounce his desire for wealth by performing sacrifices and acts of charity. He should learn to renounce his desire for wife and children by experiencing family life. And he should learn to renounce his desire for promotion to a higher planet in his next life, O saintly Vasudeva, by studying the effects of time. Self-controlled sages who have thus renounced their attachment to household life go to the forest to perform austerities.

COMMENTARY

One cannot destroy *karma* without giving up all material desires, and freedom from material desires arises by the following process mentioned in this verse which describes how worship of Kṛṣṇa brings auspiciousness (*svasty-ayanam:* v.37).

The sages said, "One should give up the desire for wealth (*vittaiṣaṇām*) by charity and sacrifice which are based on the fruits of wealth. By acts of charity and sacrifice one will come to the realization, 'What use do I have for wealth?' One should renounce his desires to enjoy female association and begetting children by enjoying according to the rules of household life (*gṛhair:gṛhocitair bhogaiḥ*). By the experience itself one will lose the desire for it."

“O saintly Vasudeva (*deva*), by perceiving the destructive influence of time, or by realizing that the demigods also die (*deva-kālena*) one should renounce the desire for attaining the heavenly planets.” In this connection the example of practical behavior is cited by stating that wise men renounce their attachment to household life (*grāme-tyakta*) and go to the forest to perform austerities.

|| 10.84.39 ||

ṛṇais tribhir dvijo jāto devarṣi-pitṝṇāṁ prabho

yajñādhyayana-putrais tāny anistīrya tyajan patet

TRANSLATION

Dear Prabhu, a member of the twice-born classes is born with three kinds of debts—those owed to the demigods, to the sages and to his forefathers. If he leaves his body without first liquidating these debts by performing sacrifice, studying the scriptures and begetting children, he will fall down into a hellish condition.

COMMENTARY

The *śruti* says: *jāyamāno vai brāhmaṇas tribhir ṛṇavāñ jāyate brahmacaryeṇa ṛṣibhyo yajñena devebhyaḥ prajayā pitṛbhyaḥ*, “A brāhmaṇa is born with three debts. By celibacy (*brahmacarya*) and studying the *Vedas* (*ādhyayana*) he pays his debt to the sages. By sacrifice and by producing children he is freed from his debts to the demigods and forefathers (*pitṝṇāṁ*).”

|| 10.84.40 ||

tvaṁ tv adya mukto dvābhyāṁ vai ṛṣi-pitror mahā-mate

yajñair devarṇam unmucya nirṛṇo ’śaraṇo bhava

TRANSLATION

But you, O magnanimous soul, are already free from two of your debts—those to the sages and the forefathers. Now absolve yourself of your debt to the demigods by executing Vedic sacrifices, and in this way free yourself completely of debt and renounce all material shelter.

COMMENTARY

The sages said, “You are freed from two debts (*nirṛṇo*) by studying and producing offspring. Now execute sacrifices to become free from your debts to the demigods and then renounce family life (*aśaraṇo bhava:gṛhāt pravraja*).”

|| 10.84.41 ||

vasudeva bhavān nūnaṁ bhaktyā paramayā harim

jagatām īśvaraṁ prārcaḥ sa yad vāṁ putratāṁ gataḥ

TRANSLATION

O Vasudeva, without doubt you must have previously worshiped Lord Hari, the master of all worlds. Both you and your wife must have perfectly worshiped Him with supreme devotion, since He has accepted the role of your son.

COMMENTARY

The mood of the sages in this verse is as follows: "You have asked a question posing as an ordinary person, and we have answered according to ordinary scriptural rules. Actually since you are the eternally liberated (*nitya-siddha*) father of the Supreme Lord neither worldly customs nor the injunctions of scripture have any authority over you. But if you think that you are only qualified for following the rules of scripture then listen to what we have said."

The sages said, "O Vasudeva, you are resplendent (*deva:dīvyati*) with the topmost wealth (*vasu:dhanaṁ śreṣṭham*) of pure devotion. Previously You intensely worshiped Kṛṣṇa with the most excellent devotion. Therefore, why should you now fall to a lower standard of action? If it is not so, then our words mean nothing. The proof is that Kṛṣṇa Himself has appeared as your son. Nevertheless, if out of humility you think of yourself as a fallen soul and thus want to execute rituals, then do so just to teach the people in general, just as the Lord Himself does."

|| 10.84.42 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

iti tad-vacanaṁ śrutvā vasudevo mahā-manāḥ

tān ṛṣīn ṛtvijo vavre mūrdhnānamya prasādya ca

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: After hearing these statements of the sages, generous Vasudeva bowed his head to the ground and, praising them, requested them to become his priests.

|| 10.84.43 ||

ta enam ṛṣayo rājan vṛtā dharmeṇa dhārmikam

tasminn ayājayan kṣetre makhair uttama-kalpakaiḥ

TRANSLATION

Thus requested by him, O King, the sages engaged the pious Vasudeva in performing fire sacrifices at that holy place of Kurukṣetra according to strict religious principles and with most excellent ritual arrangements.

|| 10.84.44-45 ||

tad-dīkṣāyāṁ pravṛttāyāṁ vṛṣṇayaḥ puṣkara-srajaḥ

snātāḥ su-vāsaso rājan rājānaḥ suṣṭhv-alaṅkṛtāḥ

tan-mahiṣyaś ca muditā niṣka-kaṇṭhyaḥ su-vāsasaḥ

dīkṣā-śālām upājagmur āliptā vastu-pāṇayaḥ

TRANSLATION

When Mahārāja Vasudeva was about to be initiated for the sacrifice, O King, the Vṛṣṇis came to the initiation pavilion after bathing and putting on fine clothes and garlands of lotuses. The other kings also came, elaborately ornamented, as well as all their joyful queens, who wore jeweled lockets around their necks and were also clad in fine garments. The royal wives were anointed with sandalwood paste and carried auspicious items for the worship.

COMMENTARY

Carrying various auspicious items in their hands (*vastu-pāṇayaḥ*), the queens (*mahiṣyaḥ*) entered the arena.

|| 10.84.46 ||

nedur mṛdaṅga-paṭaha-śaṅkha-bhery-ānakādayaḥ

nanṛtur naṭa-nartakyas tuṣṭuvuḥ sūta-māgadhāḥ

jaguḥ su-kaṇṭhyo gandharvyaḥ saṅgītaṁ saha-bhartṛkāḥ

TRANSLATION

Mṛdaṅgas, paṭahas, conchshells, bherīs, ānakas and other instruments resounded, male and female dancers danced, and sūtas and māgadhas recited glorifications. Sweet-voiced Gandharvīs sang, accompanied by their husbands.

|| 10.84.47 ||

tam abhyaṣiñcan vidhi-vad aktam abhyaktam ṛtvijaḥ

patnībhir aṣṭā-daśabhiḥ soma-rājam ivoḍubhiḥ

TRANSLATION

After Vasudeva's eyes had been decorated with black cosmetic and his body smeared with fresh butter, the priests initiated him according to scriptural rules by sprinkling him and his eighteen wives with sacred water. Encircled by his wives, he resembled the regal moon encircled by stars.

COMMENTARY

With his eyes anointed with mascara and his body smeared with newly-churned butter, Vasudeva along with His eighteen wives appeared like the king of moons (*soma rājam*) encircled by the stars.

|| 10.84.48 ||

tābhir dukūla-valayair hāra-nūpura-kuṇḍalaiḥ

sv-alaṅkṛtābhir vibabhau dīkṣito 'jina-saṁvṛtaḥ

TRANSLATION

Vasudeva received initiation along with his wives, who wore silk sārīs and were adorned with bangles, necklaces, ankle bells and earrings. With his body wrapped in a deerskin, Vasudeva shone splendidly.

|| 10.84.49 ||

tasyartvijo mahā-rāja ratna-kauśeya-vāsasaḥ

sa-sadasyā virejus te yathā vṛtra-haṇo 'dhvare

TRANSLATION

My dear Mahārāja Parīkṣit, Vasudeva's priests and the officiating members of the assembly, dressed in silk dhotīs and jeweled ornaments, looked so effulgent that they seemed to be standing in the sacrificial arena of Indra, the killer of Vṛtra.

|| 10.84.50 ||

tadā rāmaś ca kṛṣṇaś ca svaiḥ svair bandhubhir anvitau

rejatuḥ sva-sutair dārair jīveśau sva-vibhūtibhiḥ

TRANSLATION

At that time Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa, the Lords of all living entities, shone forth with great majesty in the company of Their respective sons, wives and other family members, who were expansions of Their opulences.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, the Lords of all living entities (*jīveśau*), appeared.

|| 10.84.51 ||

īje 'nu-yajñaṁ vidhinā agni-hotrādi-lakṣaṇaiḥ

prākṛtair vaikṛtair yajñair dravya-jñāna-kriyeśvaram

TRANSLATION

Performing various kinds of Vedic sacrifice according to the proper regulations, Vasudeva worshiped the Lord of all sacrificial paraphernalia, mantras and rituals. He executed both primary and secondary sacrifices, offering oblations to the sacred fire and carrying out other aspects of sacrificial worship.

COMMENTARY

Vasudeva worshiped Viṣṇu, the Lord of all sacrificial paraphernalia (*dravya*), *mantras* (*jñāna*) and rituals (*kriyā*) by primary sacrifices such as Jyotiṣṭoma and Darśa-pūrṇamāsa, which are prescribed in detail in revealed scriptures, and by secondary sacrifices such as the Saurya and Satra which are modified in form and rule. The word *dravyam* refers to the sacrificial rice cakes (*puroḍāśa*), which are offered when *soma* is not offered.

|| 10.84.52 ||

athartvigbhyo 'dadāt kāle yathāmnātaṁ sa dakṣiṇāḥ

sv-alaṅkṛtebhyo 'laṅkṛtya go-bhū-kanyā mahā-dhanāḥ

TRANSLATION

Then, at the appropriate time and according to scripture, Vasudeva remunerated the priests by decorating them with precious ornaments, though they were already richly adorned, and offering them valuable gifts of cows, land and marriageable girls.

COMMENTARY

Vasudeva (*sa*) gave donations (*dakṣiṇa*) in the form of gold, jewels, cows, land and virgin girls (*kanyā*).

|| 10.84.53 ||

patnī-saṁyājāvabhṛthyaiś caritvā te maharṣayaḥ

sasnū rāma-hrade viprā yajamāna-puraḥ-sarāḥ

TRANSLATION

After supervising the patnī-saṁyāja and avabhṛthya rituals, the great brāhmaṇa sages bathed in Lord Paraśurāma's lake with the sponsor of the sacrifice, Vasudeva, who led them.

COMMENTARY

The *patnī-saṁyāja* is the ritual in which the sponsor of the sacrifice offers oblations together with his wife. The *brāhmaṇas* also supervised the final rituals known as *avabhṛthya*.

|| 10.84.54 ||

snāto 'laṅkāra-vāsāṁsi vandibhyo 'dāt tathā striyaḥ

tataḥ sv-alaṅkṛto varṇān ā-śvabhyo 'nnena pūjayat

TRANSLATION

His sacred bath complete, Vasudeva joined with his wives in giving the jewelry and clothes they had been wearing to the professional reciters. Vasudeva then put on new garments, after which he honored all classes of people by feeding everyone, even the dogs.

COMMENTARY

Having bathed, Vasudeva, along with his wives, gave cloth and orna-ments to the reciters and fed everyone down to the horses and dogs.

|| 10.84.55-56 ||

bandhūn sa-dārān sa-sutān pāribarheṇa bhūyasā

vidarbha-kośala-kurūn kāśi-kekaya-sṛñjayān

sadasyartvik-sura-gaṇān nṛ-bhūta-pitṛ-cāraṇān

śrī-niketam anujñāpya śaṁsantaḥ prayayuḥ kratum

TRANSLATION

With opulent gifts he honored his relatives, including all their wives and children; the royalty of the Vidarbha, Kosala, Kuru, Kāśī, Kekaya and Sṛñjaya kingdoms; the officiating members of the assembly; and also the priests, witnessing demigods, humans, spirits, forefathers and Cāraṇas. Then, taking permission from Lord Kṛṣṇa, the shelter of the goddess of fortune, the various guests departed as they all chanted the glories of Vasudeva's sacrifice.

COMMENTARY

Vasudeva worshiped everyone from his relatives to the Cāraṇas, a class of minor demigods, with gifts (*pāribarheṇa.prīti-dānena*) as tokens of his affection, and then they all departed (*prayayuḥ*).

|| 10.84.57-58 ||

dhṛtarāṣṭro 'nujaḥ pārthā bhīṣmo droṇaḥ pṛthā yamau

nārado bhagavān vyāsaḥ suhṛt-sambandhi-bāndhavāḥ

bandhūn pariṣvajya yadūn sauhṛdāklinna-cetasaḥ

yayur viraha-kṛcchreṇa sva-deśāṁś cāpare janāḥ

TRANSLATION

The Yadus were all embraced by their friends, close family members and other relatives, including Dhṛtarāṣṭra and his younger brother, Vidura; Pṛthā and her sons; Bhīṣma; Droṇa; the twins Nakula and Sahadeva; Nārada; and Vedavyāsa, the Personality of Godhead. Their hearts melting with affection, these and the other guests left for their kingdoms, their progress slowed by the pain of separation.

COMMENTARY

Anuja refers to Dhṛtarāṣṭra's younger brother Vidura.

|| 10.84.59 ||

nandas tu saha gopālair bṛhatyā pūjayārcitaḥ

kṛṣṇa-rāmograsenādyair nyavātsīd bandhu-vatsalaḥ

TRANSLATION

Nanda Mahārāja showed his affection for his relatives, the Yadus, by remaining with them a little longer, together with his cowherds. During his stay, Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma, Ugrasena and the others honored him with especially opulent worship.

COMMENTARY

The word *tu* (and) indicates that Nanda was worshiped much more elaborately even than the sons of Pāṇḍu by Vasudeva, because even when everyone else went away, Nanda Mahārāja did not leave for a long time.

|| 10.84.60 ||

vasudevo ’ñjasottīrya manoratha-mahārṇavam

suhṛd-vṛtaḥ prīta-manā nandam āha kare spṛśan

TRANSLATION

Having so easily crossed over the vast ocean of his ambition, Vasudeva felt fully satisfied. In the company of his many well-wishers, he took Nanda by the hand and addressed him as follows.

COMMENTARY

Crossing the great ocean of his desires to perform Vedic sacrifices, Vasudeva felt satisfied and spoke to Nanda.

|| 10.84.61 ||

śrī-vasudeva uvāca

bhrātar īśa-kṛtaḥ pāśo nṛnāṁ yaḥ sneha-saṁjñitaḥ

taṁ dustyajam ahaṁ manye śūrāṇām api yoginām

TRANSLATION

Śrī Vasudeva said: My dear brother, God Himself has tied the knot called affection, which tightly binds human beings together. It seems to me that even great heroes and mystics find it very difficult to free themselves from it.

COMMENTARY

Vasudeva said, "I think these bonds of affection are hard to cut (*durbhidam*) for warriors by their strength and for yogīs by their knowledge." The extra verb (*durbhidam*) should be added. The meaning is "Throughout the day and night the two of you are tightly bound by the rope of affection for my sons."

|| 10.84.62 ||

asmāsv apratikalpeyaṁ yat kṛtājñeṣu sattamaiḥ

maitry arpitāphalā cāpi na nivarteta karhicit

TRANSLATION

Indeed, the Supreme Lord must have created the bonds of affection, for such exalted saints as you have never stopped showing matchless friendship toward us ingrates, although it has never been properly reciprocated.

COMMENTARY

Vasudeva said, "This friendship which has been offered by such exalted saints as you, by bestowing the great treasure of firm affection for Rāma and Kṛṣṇa is incomparable and will certainly never cease. Who are we? We are ungrateful (*kṛta-ajñeṣu*), not acknowledging the help you rendered to us. Hence, how can we, who are so wicked, be so shameless to even speak this to you, who are the most saintly?"

|| 10.84.63 ||

prāg akalpāc ca kuśalaṁ bhrātar vo nācarāma hi

adhunā śrī-madāndhākṣā na paśyāmaḥ puraḥ sataḥ

TRANSLATION

Previously, dear brother, we did nothing to benefit you because we were unable to, yet even now that you are present before us, our eyes are so blinded by the intoxication of material good fortune that we continue to ignore you.

COMMENTARY

In this verse Vasudeva explains his failure to show gratitude. Vasudeva said, “Previously, because of being imprisoned by Kaṁsa I did nothing to help you. Now even though Kaṁsa has been killed and I am free, still due to the intoxication of wealth I continue to ignore you.”

|| 10.84.64 ||

mā rājya-śrīr abhūt puṁsaḥ śreyas-kāmasya māna-da

sva-janān uta bandhūn vā na paśyati yayāndha-dṛk

TRANSLATION

O most respectful one, may a person who wants the highest benefit in life never gain kingly opulence, for it leaves him blind to the needs of his own family and friends.

COMMENTARY

A person should not (*mā abhūt*) obtain wealth and kingdom. The addition of “a” in *abhut* is poetic license. Submerging Nanda in the ocean of supreme humility by his praises, Vasudeva also became submerged in humility as indicated by his words.

|| 10.84.65 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

evaṁ sauhṛda-śaithilya-citta ānakadundubhiḥ

ruroda tat-kṛtāṁ maitrīṁ smarann aśru-vilocanaḥ

TRANSLATION

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: His heart softened by feelings of intimate sympathy, Vasudeva wept. His eyes brimmed with tears as he remembered the friendship Nanda had shown him.

|| 10.84.66 ||

nandas tu sakhyuḥ priya-kṛt premṇā govinda-rāmayoḥ

adya śva iti māsāṁs trīn yadubhir mānito ’vasat

TRANSLATION

And on his part, Nanda was also full of affection for his friend Vasudeva. Thus during the following days Nanda would repeatedly announce, "I will be leaving later today" and "I will be leaving tomorrow." But out of love for Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma he remained there for three more months, honored by all the Yadus.

COMMENTARY

"*Tu*" indicates Nanda's different intention. Vasudeva's intention was different from Nanda's. The phrase *adya śva* "today, tomorrow" means that even after settling in the night that he would leave first thing in the morning after breaking Vasudeva's misconception that Kṛṣṇa was his son, Nanda would then decide, "I'll go later today," and then, when the afternoon came, he would say, "I'll just stay until tomorrow and take my son and go back to Vraja."

Nanda Mahārāja was procrastinating due to his affection (*priya-kṛt*) for Vasudeva because he did not want to break his heart. Thus Nanda Mahārāja stayed there for three months sharing his ecstatic love (*premṇā*) with Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma (*govinda-rāmayoḥ*).

|| 10.84.67-68 ||

tataḥ kāmaiḥ pūryamāṇaḥ sa-vrajaḥ saha-bāndhavaḥ

parārdhyābharaṇa-kṣauma- nānānarghya-paricchadaiḥ

vasudevograsenābhyāṁ kṛṣṇoddhava-balādibhiḥ

dattam ādāya pāribarhaṁ yāpito yadubhir yayau

TRANSLATION

Then, after Vasudeva, Ugrasena, Kṛṣṇa, Uddhava, Balarāma and others had fulfilled his desires and presented him with precious ornaments, fine linen and varieties of priceless household furnishings, Nanda Mahārāja accepted all these gifts and took his leave. Seen off by all the Yadus, he departed with his family members and the residents of Vraja.

COMMENTARY

Then, after three months, Vrajarāja Nanda declared, "O Kṛṣṇa, for one drop of the perspiration from Your divine face I am ready to give up millions of lives. Let us leave now for Vraja; I cannot stay here any longer."

Nanda continued, "My dear friend Vasudeva, please send Kṛṣṇa off to Vraja. O King Ugasena, please order my dear friend to do this. Otherwise, before your very eyes we will give up our lives in this holy place of Kurukṣetra by drowning ourselves in

Paraśurāma's lake. We did not come here on the occasion of the solar eclipse to gain some pious credits. Rather, we Vrajavāsīs came here with the conviction in our hearts that if we cannot get Kṛṣṇa back we will die." Hearing these desperate words from Nanda, Vasudeva and the others tried to pacify him with costly jewelry and valuable gifts.

Well-versed in the arts of diplomacy, Vasudeva consulted with his most trustworthy friends and then satisfied Nanda by telling him, "My dearest friend, O Vrajarāja, it is true that none of you can live without Kṛṣṇa. And how can we allow you to kill yourselves? Therefore, by all means I must send Kṛṣṇa back to Vraja. I will do so right after we accompany Him and His relatives, helpless wives and friends back to Dvārakā. Then, the very next day, without obstructing Him in any way, I will let Kṛṣṇa leave for Vraja at an auspicious time of the day. This I swear to you a thousand times over. After all, how can we who came here with Kṛṣṇa go home without Him? What will people say about us? You are vastly learned in all these matters, so please forgive this offense of mine for making this request of you."

Ugrasena said, "O king of Vraja, I vouch for the surety of this. I solemnly vow to send Kṛṣṇa back to Vraja even if I have to do it by force."

Then Kṛṣṇa, accompanied by Uddhava and Balarāma, spoke to Nanda in private. Kṛṣṇa said, "Dear father, if I go directly to Vraja today, leaving aside all these Vrsnis, they will die from the pain of separation from Me. Then thousands of enemies stronger than Kesi or Arista will kill these kings. Being omniscient, I know My own future. Please listen while I describe it to you. After returning to Dvārakā, I will receive an invitation from Yudhiṣṭhira and go to Indraprastha to participate in his Rājasūya sacrifice. There I will kill Śiśupāla, after which I will again return to Dvārakā and kill Śālva. Next I will travel to a place just south of Mathurā to save you by killing Dantavakra. I will then return to Vraja, see all My old friends and again sit on your lap with great pleasure. Indeed, with great happiness I will spend the rest of My life with you. The creator has written this fate on My forehead, and it has been written on your foreheads that until the day I return you must tolerate separation from Me. Neither of our destinies can possibly be changed, so give up your stubbornness and return to Vraja.

"If in the meantime, you, My dear parents and My beloved friends, are distressed by the pain of separation from Me, then whenever you wish to feed Me some delicacy or play some game with Me or simply see Me, just close your eyes and I will appear before you to make all your difficulties insignificant and to fulfill all your desires. I promise you this, and the young friends of Mine whose lives I saved in a forest fire can vouch for it."

Convinced by all these arguments that his son's happiness was of prime importance, Nanda told Vasudeva and the others, "I agree." Accepting the gifts which his friends

offered him as they all shed incessant tears, Nanda Mahārāja was seen off by a large army of Yādavas.

This explanation has been given based on the two words *kāmaiḥ*, (desirable objects) and *pūryamāṇaḥ* (satiated). Otherwise, these words would make no sense unless there was such an explanation of Nanda being completely satisfied. For Nanda and Yaśodā, who could not believe at all that Kṛṣṇa was the son of Vasudeva and Devakī, even if testified by Brahmā or his sons and daughters, and for who all material wealth and ornaments were considered trifling in comparison to just the remembrance of the treasure of the happiness attained by touching the back of their finger to Kṛṣṇa's chin, how would it be possible to satisfy them with millions of silks and valuable furnishings given by Vasudeva?

For arguments sake even if they were satisfied or could be satisfied, the text also mentions that not only Nanda and his wife, but all the inhabitants of Vraja, including the *gopas, gopīs* and all his friends were satisfied. If one were to make the bold supposition that Kṛṣṇa's mother and father, and also all His beloved *gopīs* and *gopas* were satisfied simply by getting valuable ornaments, cloth and jewels and then went back Vraja, we would be left with the conclusion that the prema of all the Vrajavāsīs must have disappeared. We should consider this matter in light of the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, which states that one characteristic of *prema* is *ananya-mamatā*, "the unflinching sense of possessiveness towards one's beloved, wherein one is completely apathetic to other objects." Therefore, such an explanation must be rejected.

|| 10.84.69 ||

nando gopās' ca gopyaś ca govinda-caraṇāmbuje

manaḥ kṣiptaṁ punar hartum anīśā mathurāṁ yayuḥ

TRANSLATION

Unable to withdraw their minds from Lord Govinda's lotus feet, where they had surrendered them, Nanda and the cowherd men and women returned to Mathurā.

|| 10.84.70 ||

bandhuṣu pratiyāteṣu vṛṣṇayaḥ kṛṣṇa-devatāḥ

vīkṣya prāvṛṣam āsannād yayur dvāravatīṁ punaḥ

TRANSLATION

Their relatives having thus departed, and seeing that the rainy season was approaching, the Vṛṣṇis, whose only Lord was Kṛṣṇa, went back to Dvārakā.

|| 10.84.71 ||

janebhyaḥ kathayāṁ cakrur yadu-deva-mahotsavam

yad āsīt tīrtha-yātrāyāṁ suhṛt-sandarśanādikam

TRANSLATION

They told the people of the city about the festive sacrifices performed by Vasudeva, lord of the Yadus, and about everything else that had happened during their pilgrimage, especially how they had met with all their loved ones.

Thus ends the commentary on the Eighty-fourth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Eighty-six

Arjuna Kidnaps Subhadrā, and Kṛṣṇa Blesses His Devotees

|| 10.86.1 ||

śrī-rājovāca

brahman veditum icchāmaḥ svasārāṁ rāma-kṛṣṇayoḥ

yathopayeme vijayo yā mamāsīt pitāmahī

TRANSLATION

King Parīkṣit said: O brāhmaṇa, we would like to learn how Arjuna married Lord Balarāma's and Lord Kṛṣṇa's sister, who was my grandmother.

COMMENTARY

In this chapter, Arjuna disguises himself as a *sannyāsī* to gain Subhadrā as his wife. Kṛṣṇa goes to Mithilā in order to please two of His devotees, a king and a *brāhmaṇa*.

King Parīkṣit could understand from Śukadeva Gosvāmī's gestures that the narration was reaching its end, so he said, "O master, although we have heard about the marriages of everyone from Baladeva to Aniruddha, we have not heard anything about Subhadrā's marriage." Therefore he speaks this verse. "How did Arjuna (*vijayo*) marry her? I must ask you about this because Subhadrā is my grandmother."

|| 10.86.2-3 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

arjunas tīrtha-yātrāyāṁ paryaṭann avanīṁ prabhuḥ

gataḥ prabhāsam aśṛṇon mātuleyīṁ sa ātmanaḥ

duryodhanāya rāmas tāṁ dāsyatīti na cāpare

tal-lipsuḥ sa yatir bhūtvā tri-daṇḍī dvārakām agāt

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: While traveling far and wide visiting various holy places of pilgrimage, Arjuna came to Prabhāsa. There he heard that Lord Balarāma intended to give his maternal cousin Subhadrā to Duryodhana in marriage, and that no one else approved of this plan. Arjuna wanted to marry her himself, so he disguised himself as a renunciant, complete with triple staff, and went to Dvārakā.

COMMENTARY

Arjuna heard that Balarāma wanted to marry His cousin Subhadrā to Duryodhana. However, Vasudeva and others did not want to give Subhadrā to Duryodhana. Desiring to (*tal-lipsuḥ*) marry her, and being encouraged by his co-conspirator, his dear friend Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna dressed himself as a most worshipful *sannyāsī* (*tri-daṇḍi*) to deceive Balarāma.

|| 10.86.4 ||

tatra vai vārṣitān māsān avātsīt svārtha-sādhakaḥ

pauraiḥ sabhājito 'bhīkṣṇaṁ rāmeṇājānatā ca saḥ

TRANSLATION

He stayed there during the monsoon months to fulfill his purpose. Lord Balarāma and the other residents of the city, not recognizing him, offered him all honor and hospitality.

|| 10.86.5 ||

ekadā gṛham ānīya ātithyena nimantrya tam

śraddhayopahṛtaṁ bhaikṣyaṁ balena bubhuje kila

TRANSLATION

One day Lord Balarāma brought him to His home as His invited dinner guest, and Arjuna ate the food the Lord respectfully offered him.

COMMENTARY

From the word *ekadā* (once) it should be understood that Arjuna in his *sannyāsī* role had just finished the four-month vow (*cātur-māsya*) of the rainy season and could now again accept general invitations from householders.

|| 10.86.6 ||

so 'paśyat tatra mahatīṁ kanyāṁ vīra-mano-harām

prīty-utphullekṣaṇas tasyāṁ bhāva-kṣubdhaṁ mano dadhe

TRANSLATION

There he saw the wonderful maiden Subhadrā, who was enchanting to heroes. His eyes opened wide with delight, and his mind became agitated and absorbed in thoughts of her.

COMMENTARY

That wonderfully, attractive maiden was enchanting to heroes (*vīra-mano-harām*) like Arjuna. In some editions the phrase is written *dhīra manoharam*, which means "enchanting to a sober, self-controlled saint."

|| 10.86.7 ||

sāpi taṁ cakame vīkṣya nārīṇāṁ hṛdayaṁ-gamam

hasantī vrīḍitāpaṅgī tan-nyasta-hṛdayekṣaṇā

TRANSLATION

Arjuna was very attractive to women, and as soon as Subhadrā saw him, she wanted to have him as her husband. Smiling bashfully with sidelong glances, she fixed her heart and eyes upon him.

COMMENTARY

Upon seeing Arjuna, who was very attractive to women, Subhadrā confirmed in her mind by his characteristics that Arjuna was not a *sannyāsī*, and thus she fell in love with him.

|| 10.86.8 ||

tāṁ paraṁ samanudhyāyann antaraṁ prepsur arjunaḥ

na lebhe śaṁ bhramac-cittaḥ kāmenāti-balīyasā

TRANSLATION

Meditating only on her and waiting for the opportunity to take her away, Arjuna had no peace. His heart trembled with passionate desire.

COMMENTARY

Waiting for the right opportunity (*antaraṁ*) to take her away, Arjuna had no peace (*śam*).

|| 10.86.9 ||

mahatyāṁ deva-yātrāyāṁ ratha-sthāṁ durga-nirgatāṁ

jahārānumataḥ pitroḥ kṛṣṇasya ca mahā-rathaḥ

TRANSLATION

Once, on the occasion of a great temple festival in honor of the Supreme Lord, Subhadrā rode out of the fortresslike palace on a chariot, and at that time the mighty chariot warrior Arjuna took the opportunity to kidnap her. Subhadrā's parents and Kṛṣṇa had sanctioned this.

COMMENTARY

Arjuna kidnapped Subhadrā during the annual Ratha-yātrā for Lord Viṣṇu on the occasion of His rising from mystic sleep at the end of Cāturmāsya. Arjuna did this with the permission of Kṛṣṇa and Subhadrā's parents, Vasudeva and Devakī.

|| 10.86.10 ||

ratha-stho dhanur ādāya śūrāṁś cārundhato bhaṭān

vidrāvya krośatāṁ svānāṁ sva-bhāgaṁ mṛga-rāḍ iva

TRANSLATION

Standing on his chariot, Arjuna took up his bow and drove off the valiant fighters and palace guards who tried to block his way. As her relatives shouted in anger, he took Subhadrā away just as a lion takes his prey from the midst of lesser animals.

COMMENTARY

Ignoring Subhadrā's crying relatives, Arjuna whisked her away. The genitive case of the word *krośatām*, "they shouted in anger," expresses the idea of contempt.

|| 10.86.11 ||

tac chrutvā kṣubhito rāmaḥ parvaṇīva mahārṇavaḥ

gṛhīta-pādaḥ kṛṣṇena suhṛdbhiś cānusāntvitaḥ

TRANSLATION

When He heard of Subhadrā's kidnapping, Lord Balarāma became as disturbed as the ocean during the full moon, but Lord Kṛṣṇa respectfully took hold of His feet and, together with other family members, pacified Him by explaining the matter.

|| 10.86.12 ||

prāhiṇot pāribarhāṇi vara-vadhvor mudā balaḥ

mahā-dhanopaskarebha-rathāśva-nara-yoṣitaḥ

TRANSLATION

Lord Balarāma then happily sent the bride and groom very valuable wedding gifts consisting of elephants, chariots, horses and male and female servants.

COMMENTARY

Balarāma offered many wedding gifts (*pāribarhāṇi*) as tokens of His affection.

|| 10.86.13 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

kṛṣṇasyāsīd dvija-śreṣṭhaḥ śrutadeva iti śrutaḥ

kṛṣṇaika-bhaktyā pūrṇārthaḥ śāntaḥ kavir alampataḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: There was a devotee of Kṛṣṇa's known as Śrutadeva, who was a first-class brāhmaṇa. Perfectly satisfied by rendering unalloyed devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, he was peaceful, learned and free from sense gratification.

COMMENTARY

Here, without being asked, Śukadeva starts narrating a special pastime of Kṛṣṇa's, which he had witnessed and now spontaneously remembered. The word *kṛṣṇasyā* means that the *brāhmaṇa* accepted Kṛṣṇa as his master (*kṛṣṇa-svāmikaḥ*).

|| 10.86.14 ||

sa uvāsa videheṣu mithilāyāṁ gṛhāśramī

anīhayāgatāhārya-nirvartita-nija-kriyaḥ

TRANSLATION

Living as a religious householder in the city of Mithilā, within the kingdom of Videha, he managed to fulfill his obligations while maintaining himself with whatever sustenance easily came his way.

COMMENTARY

He lived in Mithilā in the province of Videha, and maintained himself by accepting whatever food (*āhārya: bhojyam*) came of its own accord, while absorbed in worshiping (*nija kriyaḥ*) Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.86.15 ||

yātrā-mātraṁ tv ahar ahar daivād upanamaty uta

nādhikaṁ tāvatā tuṣṭaḥ kriyā cakre yathocitāḥ

TRANSLATION

By the will of Providence he obtained each day just what he needed for his maintenance, and no more. Satisfied with this much, he properly executed his religious duties.

COMMENTARY

By the will of Lord Kṛṣṇa, only as much as was necessary to support his body and that of his family came to him, and nothing more.

|| 10.86.16 ||

tathā tad-rāṣṭra-pālo 'ṅga bahulāśva iti śrutaḥ

maithilo niraham-māna ubhāv apy acyuta-priyau

TRANSLATION

Similarly free from false ego was the ruler of that kingdom, my dear Parīkṣit, a descendant of the Mithila dynasty named Bahulāśva. Both these devotees were very dear to Lord Acyuta.

COMMENTARY

There was a ruler coming in the line of King Janaka of Mithilā named Bahulāśva, who was not falsely proud (*niraham-mānaḥ*) over being the king.

|| 10.86.17 ||

tayoḥ prasanno bhagavān dārukeṇāhṛtaṁ ratham

āruhya sākaṁ munibhir videhān prayayau prabhuḥ

TRANSLATION

Pleased with both of them, the Supreme Personality of Godhead mounted His chariot, which Dāruka had brought, and traveled to Videha with a group of sages.

COMMENTARY

The phrase *tayoḥ prasanno*, "satisfied with both of them" implies that both King Bahulāśva and the *brāhmaṇa* Śrutadeva could not come to Dvārakā to see Kṛṣṇa because they were duty bound to serve their family Deities. Therefore, Śrī Kṛṣṇa personally went out of His way to visit those two eager devotees and give them His *darśana*. While leaving Dvārakā, Kṛṣṇa saw the sages walking behind Him. Understanding that they would become fatigued, Kṛṣṇa forcibly placed them on His chariot and then sped off to Mithilā.

|| 10.86.18 ||

nārado vāmadevo 'triḥ kṛṣṇo rāmo 'sito 'ruṇiḥ

ahaṁ bṛhaspatiḥ kaṇvo maitreyaś cyavanādayaḥ

TRANSLATION

Among these sages were Nārada, Vāmadeva, Atri, Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana Vyāsa, Paraśurāma, Asita, Aruṇi, myself, Bṛhaspati, Kaṇva, Maitreya and Cyavana.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana Vyāsa (*kṛṣṇaḥ*), Paraśurāma (*rāmo*), and Śukadeva (*ahaṁ*) were among the sages.

|| 10.86.19 ||

tatra tatra tam āyāntaṁ paurā jānapadā nṛpa

upatasthuḥ sārghya-hastā grahaiḥ sūryam ivoditam

TRANSLATION

In every city and town the Lord passed along the way, O King, the people came forward to worship Him with offerings of arghya water in their hands, as if to worship the risen sun surrounded by planets.

|| 10.86.20 ||

ānarta-dhanva-kuru-jāṅgala-kaṅka-matsya-

pāñcāla-kunti-madhu-kekaya-kośalārṇāḥ

anye ca tan-mukha-sarojam udāra-hāsa-

snigdhekṣaṇaṁ nṛpa papur dṛśibhir nr-nāryaḥ

TRANSLATION

The men and women of Ānarta, Dhanva, Kuru-jāṅgala, Kaṅka, Matsya, Pañcāla, Kunti, Madhu, Kekaya, Kośala, Arṇa and many other kingdoms drank with their eyes the nectarean beauty of Lord Kṛṣṇa's lotuslike face, which was graced with generous smiles and affectionate glances.

COMMENTARY

The residents of Ānarta and other kingdoms, who were near Kṛṣṇa's path, and even others who were far away gathered along the route to drink (*papur:āsvādayām*) with their eyes (*dṛśibhiḥ:netraiḥ*) the sweet nectar from Kṛṣṇa's lotus face.

|| 10.86.21 ||

tebhyaḥ sva-vīkṣaṇa-vinaṣṭa-tamisra-dṛgbhyaḥ

kṣemaṁ tri-loka-gurur artha-dṛśaṁ ca yacchan

śṛṇvan dig-anta-dhavalaṁ sva-yaśo 'śubha-ghnaṁ

gītaṁ surair nṛbhir agāc chanakair videhān

TRANSLATION

Simply by glancing at those who came to see Him, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the spiritual master of the three worlds, delivered them from the blindness of materialism. As He thus endowed them with fearlessness and divine vision, He heard demigods and men singing His glories, which purify the entire universe and destroy all misfortune. Gradually, He reached Videha.

COMMENTARY

How could they relish the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa's transcendental form with their mundane vision? This is explained in this verse. Kṛṣṇa destroyed the ignorance in their eyes (*dṛgbhyaḥ:netrāṇi*) by His merciful glance (*sva-vīkṣaṇa:sva-kṛpāvalokaḥ*), and bestowed upon them realization of the supreme object (*artha-dṛśam:paramārtha-vastv-anubhāvam*) and devotion (*kṣemam: bhakti-yoga*) to Himself, which is the only means of realizing His sweetness.

Kṛṣṇa Himself states this in the *Uddhava-Gītā*: *bhaktyāham ekayā grāhyaḥ,* "I am only attainable by bhakti" (SB 11.14.21) By the grammatical rule of compound formation known as *eka-śeṣa,* the term *sta-vīkṣaṇa-vinaṣṭa-tamisra-dṛgbhyaḥ,* although in its primary sense inflected as a masculine noun, may be understood in this context as referring to both men and women.

|| 10.86.22 ||

te 'cyutaṁ prāptam ākarṇya paurā jānapadā nṛpa

abhīyur muditās tasmai gṛhītārhaṇa-pāṇayaḥ

TRANSLATION

Hearing that Lord Acyuta had arrived, O King, the residents of the cities and villages of Videha joyfully came forth to receive Him with offerings in their hands.

COMMENTARY

They went out (*abhīyuḥ*) of the city to meet Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.86.23 ||

dṛṣṭvā ta uttamaḥ-ślokaṁ prīty-utphulānanāśayāḥ

kair dhṛtāñjalibhir nemuḥ śruta-pūrvāṁs tathā munīn

TRANSLATION

As soon as the people saw Lord Uttamaḥśloka, their faces and hearts blossomed with affection. Joining their palms above their heads, they bowed down to the Lord and to the sages accompanying Him, whom they had previously only heard about.

COMMENTARY

They offered respect to Kṛṣṇa and the sages by placing their folded hands above their heads.

|| 10.86.24 ||

svānugrahāya samprāptaṁ manvānau taṁ jagad-gurum

maithilaḥ śrutadevaś ca pādayoḥ petatuḥ prabhoḥ

TRANSLATION

Both the King of Mithilā and Śrutadeva fell at the Lord's feet, each thinking that the spiritual master of the universe had come there just to show him mercy.

|| 10.86.25 ||

nyamantrayetāṁ dāśārham ātithyena saha dvijaiḥ

maithilaḥ śrutadevaś ca yugapat saṁhatāñjalī

TRANSLATION

At exactly the same time, King Maithila and Śrutadeva each went forward with joined palms and invited the Lord of the Daśārhas to be his guest, along with the brāhmaṇa sages.

COMMENTARY

The form of the verb *nyamantrayetāṁ*, "invited" (*atmanepada*) is poetic license.

|| 10.86.26 ||

bhagavāṁs tad abhipretya dvayoḥ priya-cikīrṣayā

ubhayor āviśad geham ubhābhyāṁ tad-alakṣitaḥ

TRANSLATION

Wanting to please them both, the Lord accepted both their invitations. Thus He simultaneously went to both homes, and neither could see Him entering the other's house.

COMMENTARY

Understanding that both Śrutadeva and Bahulāśva wanted Him to visit their homes, Kṛṣṇa manifested Himself and all the sages in duplicate forms, and entered both houses without the other person seeing it. The king thought "Merciful Kṛṣṇa has accepted my invitation only and is coming to my house, and Śrutadeva is returning home alone, deprived of the Lord's association." And Śrutadeva thought, "Kṛṣṇa is accepting my invitation and the king is going home alone."

The king and the brāhmaṇa thus manifested two forms, one joyful with Kṛṣṇa and one despondent without Kṛṣṇa. The neighbors of that manifestation of the king who was enjoying Kṛṣṇa's association went to Śrutadeva's home and saw him unhappy in separation from Kṛṣṇa. Similarly, the assistants of Śrutadeva, who was with Kṛṣṇa, saw the king alone in his home despondent without Kṛṣṇa.

|| 10.86.27-29 ||

śrāntān apy atha tān dūrāj janakaḥ sva-gṛhāgatān

ānīteṣv āsanāgryeṣu sukhāsīnān mahā-manāḥ

pravṛddha-bhaktyā uddharṣa-hṛdayāsrāvilekṣaṇaḥ

natvā tad-aṅghrīn prakṣālya tad-apo loka-pāvanīḥ

sa-kuṭumbo vahan mūrdhnā pūjayāṁ cakra īśvarān

gandha-mālyāmbarākalpa-dhūpa-dīpārghya-go-vṛṣaiḥ

TRANSLATION

When King Bahulāśva, a descendant of Janaka, saw Lord Kṛṣṇa approaching his house from a distance with the sages, who were somewhat fatigued from the journey, he immediately arranged to have seats of honor brought out for them. After they were all comfortably seated, the wise King, his heart overflowing with joy and his eyes clouded by tears, bowed down to them and washed their feet with intense devotion. Taking the wash water, which could purify the entire world, he sprinkled it on his head and the heads of his family members. Then he worshiped all those great lords by offering them fragrant sandalwood paste, flower garlands, fine clothing and ornaments, incense, lamps, arghya and cows and bulls.

COMMENTARY

Bahulāśva's eyes were filled with tears (*asrāvilekṣaṇaḥ*). The word *īśvarān*, "great lords" refers not only to the Kṛṣṇa but also to the exalted sages in His company who were in a sense equal to the Lord, and thus the king worshiped them together.

|| 10.86.30 ||

vācā madhurayā prīṇann idam āhānna-tarpitān

pādāv aṅka-gatau viṣṇoḥ saṁspṛśañ chanakair mudā

TRANSLATION

When they had eaten to their full satisfaction, for their further pleasure the King began to speak slowly and in a gentle voice as he held Lord Viṣṇu's feet in his lap and happily massaged them.

|| 10.86.31 ||

śrī-bahulāśva uvāca

bhavān hi sarva-bhūtānām ātmā sākṣī sva-dṛg vibho

atha nas tvat-padāmbhojaṁ smaratāṁ darśanaṁ gataḥ

TRANSLATION

Śrī Bahulāśva said: O almighty Lord, You are the Soul of all created beings, their self-illumined witness, and now You are giving Your audience to us, who constantly meditate on Your lotus feet.

COMMENTARY

At this time King Bahulāśva was thinking, "You are the inspiring Soul of all life and consciousness, and thus by Your mercy You have awakened devotion to You within an inert dullard like me. You are the witness of all pious and impious actions, so I am sure that You remember whatever little devotional service I have ever done. You are self-illumined (*sva-dṛk*), so there is no need to inform You of anything. Therefore (*atha*), I can receive Your audience only if You come by Your free will, because we cannot neglect the worship of Your Deity form in our home for even a second. We have always been thinking (*smaratam*) of You with a long-cherished secret desire to see You, and now You have come."

|| 10.86.32 ||

sva-vacas tad ṛtaṁ kartum asmad-dṛg-gocaro bhavān

yad āttthaikānta-bhaktān me nānantaḥ śrīr ajaḥ priyaḥ

TRANSLATION

You have said, “Neither Ananta, Goddess Śrī nor unborn Brahmā is dearer to Me than My unalloyed devotee.” To prove Your own words true, You have now revealed Yourself to our eyes.

COMMENTARY

King Bahulāśva said, “You have said that even Your brother Balarāma (*ānantaḥ*), Your wife (*śrīr*) and Your son Brahmā (*ajaḥ*) are not as dear to You as Your unalloyed devotee (*aikānta-bhaktān*). By Your coming so far away from Dvārakā with no other purpose than to show Yourself to me, my doubt as to whether I am truly your unconditional devotee is now dispelled.”

Or it can mean: “You have mercifully appeared before me because You want to make me Your pure devotee.”

|| 10.86.33 ||

ko nu tvac-caraṇāmbhojam evaṁ-vid visṛjet pumān

niṣkiñcanānāṁ śāntānāṁ munīnāṁ yas tvam ātma-daḥ

TRANSLATION

What person who knows this truth would ever abandon Your lotus feet, when You are ready to give Your very self to peaceful sages who call nothing their own?

COMMENTARY

Bahulāśva said, “How can one who knows this truth (*evaṁ-vid*) ever give up Your lotus feet?”

|| 10.86.34 ||

yo ’vatīrya yador vaṁśe nṛṇāṁ saṁsaratām iha

yaśo vitene tac-chāntyai trai-lokya-vṛjināpaham

TRANSLATION

Appearing in the Yadu dynasty, You have spread Your glories, which can remove all the sins of the three worlds, just to deliver those entrapped in the cycle of birth and death.

COMMENTARY

The King said, “Appearing in the Yadu dynasty, You spread Your fame which destroys all the sins of the three worlds, and stops (*tac-chāntyai*) the cycle of repeated birth and death of mankind.”

|| 10.86.35 ||

namas tubhyaṁ bhagavate kṛṣṇāyākuṇṭha-medhase

nārāyaṇāya ṛṣaye su-śāntaṁ tapa īyuṣe

TRANSLATION

Obeisances to You, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Kṛṣṇa, whose intelligence is ever unrestricted. Obeisances to the sage Nara-Nārāyaṇa, who always undergoes austerities in perfect peace.

COMMENTARY

The King praises Kṛṣṇa to encourage the Lord to stay in his home for a few days.

The King thought, “Since contact with Kṛṣṇa can free anyone from doubts and misconceptions, the Lord’s presence in my home will strengthen my intelligence so that I cannot be pierced by the arrows of material enjoyment. In His expansion as Nara-Nārāyana Ṛṣi, Kṛṣṇa always resides in Badarikāśrama for the good fortune of the land of Bhārata, and so He should reside in my house for some days for the good fortune of Mithilā. Since Kṛṣṇa’s propensity is toward peace and simplicity (*su-śāntaṁ tapa*), He will certainly prefer my simple home to the lavish opulence of Dvārakā.”

|| 10.86.36 ||

dināni katicid bhūman gṛhān no nivasa dvijaiḥ

sametaḥ pāda-rajasā punīhīdaṁ nimeḥ kulam

TRANSLATION

Please stay a few days in our house, along with these brāhmaṇas, O all-pervading one, and with the dust of Your feet sanctify this dynasty of Nimi.

COMMENTARY

The King said, "Along with (*sametaḥ*) the sages, You should stay in my house and purify it with the dust of Your lotus feet."

|| 10.86.37 ||

ity upāmantrito rājñā bhagavāû loka-bhāvanaḥ

uvāsa kurvan kalyāṇaṁ mithilā-nara-yoṣitām

TRANSLATION

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Thus invited by the King, the Supreme Lord, sustainer of the world, consented to stay for some time to bestow good fortune on the men and women of Mithilā.

|| 10.86.38 ||

śrutadevo 'cyutaṁ prāptaṁ sva-gṛhāñ janako yathā

natvā munīn su-saṁhṛṣṭo dhunvan vāso nanarta ha

TRANSLATION

Śrutadeva received Lord Acyuta into his home with as much enthusiasm as that shown by King Bahulāśva. After bowing down to the Lord and the sages, Śrutadeva began to dance with great joy, waving his shawl.

COMMENTARY

The word *dhunvan* "waving" means that in his ecstasy Śrutadeva held his *chādar* in his hands and waved it above his head while dancing in joy over Kṛṣṇa's arrival in his home.

|| 10.86.39 ||

tṛṇa-pīṭha-bṛṣīṣv etān ānīteṣūpaveśya saḥ

svāgatenābhinandyāṅghrīn sa-bhāryo 'vanije mudā

TRANSLATION

After bringing mats of grass and darbha straw and seating his guests upon them, he greeted them with words of welcome. Then he and his wife washed their feet with great pleasure.

COMMENTARY

Śrutadeva offered them the few *kuśa āsanas* that he had. But even to provide this simple welcome he had to go next door to his neighbors and borrow extra mats.

|| 10.86.40 ||

tad-ambhasā mahā-bhāga ātmānaṁ sa-gṛhānvayam

snāpayāṁ cakra uddharṣo labdha-sarva-manorathaḥ

TRANSLATION

With the wash water, the virtuous Śrutadeva copiously sprinkled himself, his house and his family. Overjoyed, he felt that all his desires had now been fulfilled.

|| 10.86.41 ||

phalārhaṇośīra-śivāmṛtāmbubhir mṛdā surabhyā tulasī-kuśāmbuyaiḥ

ārādhayām āsa yathopapannayā saparyayā sattva-vivardhanāndhasā

TRANSLATION

He worshiped them with offerings of auspicious items easily available to him, such as fruits, uśīra root, pure, nectarean water, fragrant clay, tulasī leaves, kuśa grass and lotus flowers. Then he offered them food that increases the mode of goodness.

COMMENTARY

He worshiped them with fruits such as *āmalakī, arghya*, *uśīra* root, musk scented clay, fragrant camphor, water which was as cool and sweet as nectar, pure food (*andhasā*) which increased *sattva-guna*, and other items easily obtainable (*upapannayā*), in the sense that they had been gotten without committing violence to living creatures.

|| 10.86.42 ||

sa tarkayām āsa kuto mamānv abhūt

gṛhāndha-kūpe patitasya saṅgamaḥ

yaḥ sarva-tīrthāspada-pāda-reṇubhiḥ

kṛṣṇena cāsyātma-niketa-bhūsuraiḥ

TRANSLATION

He wondered: How is it that I, fallen into the blind well of family life, have been able to meet Lord Kṛṣṇa? And how have I also been allowed to meet these great brāhmaṇas, who always carry the Lord within their hearts? Indeed, the dust of their feet is the shelter of all holy places.

COMMENTARY

Śrutadeva wondered for what reason (*kuto mamānv abhūt*) he was able to meet Kṛṣṇa. In the word *ānv:anu*, "indeed" the syllable *ā* indicates his thinking process, and *nu* indicates his astonishment. "And how did I get to meet these sages, who are the special residence places of Kṛṣṇa's personal form, and whose foot dust is the abode of all holy places?"

|| 10.86.43 ||

sūpaviṣṭān kṛtātithyān śrutadeva upasthitaḥ

sa-bhārya-svajanāpatya uvācāṅghry-abhimarśanaḥ

TRANSLATION

When his guests were seated comfortably, having each received a proper welcome, Śrutadeva approached them and sat down nearby with his wife, children and other dependents. Then, while massaging the Lord's feet, he addressed Kṛṣṇa and the sages.

COMMENTARY

Sitting along with his wife, children, relatives and his advisers (*apatya:amātya*), Śrutadeva massaged Kṛṣṇa's feet.

|| 10.86.44 ||

śrutadeva uvāca

nādya no darśanaṁ prāptaḥ paraṁ parama-pūruṣaḥ

yarhīdaṁ śaktibhiḥ sṛṣṭvā praviṣṭo hy ātma-sattayā

TRANSLATION

Śrutadeva said: It is not that we have attained the audience of the Supreme Person only today, for we have in fact been associating with Him ever since He created this universe with His energies and then entered it in His transcendental form.

COMMENTARY

"O best of the *brāhmaṇas*, Śrutadeva, how is it that I have the good fortune of meeting you today?" When Kṛṣṇa said this, Śrutadeva replied with cleverly composed words: "O Supreme Lord, not only today did You get to see us. But beginning from the very time You created the universe and entered it by Your own presence, we, Your *tatastha-śakti jīvas* enjoying the fruits of our *karma*, have always been seen by You. But only today do we see You."

This is an example of *uttara alaṅkāra*, the poetic ornament wherein a question is mimicked by its answer.

|| 10.86.45 ||

yathā śayānaḥ puruṣo manasaivātma-māyayā

sṛṣṭvā lokaṁ paraṁ svāpnam anuviśyāvabhāsate

TRANSLATION

The Lord is like a sleeping person who creates a separate world in his imagination and then enters his own dream and sees himself within it.

COMMENTARY

Śrutadeva said, "O Lord, You created the universe just by Your mind and entered it. I am an example of the *jīvas* mentioned above. Thus it is fitting that I am seen by You." He speaks again using clever words.

The meaning is as follows: "Just as a sleeping person by his mind, immersed in the ignorance of a dream (*ātma-māyayā*), creates villages and cities and then enters them to see, feel and experience. Similarly, in the same way, You also perceive this world as manifest only by Your *māyā*. Thus, from the beginning of creation until now, You have always have been seeing me. I, however, beginning from the creation until today have not seen even a trace of You. But today by Your mercy I have seen You."

|| 10.86.46 ||

śṛṇvatāṁ gadatāṁ śaśvad arcatāṁ tvābhivandatām

ṇṛṇāṁ saṁvadatām antar hṛdi bhāsy amalātmanām

TRANSLATION

You reveal Yourself within the hearts of those persons of pure consciousness who constantly hear about You, chant about You, worship You, glorify You and converse with one another about You.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, “But persons like you, who are engaged in hearing and singing about Me, certainly attain sight of Me.” Śrutadeva responds in this verse: “You appear within those persons who talk about You among the devotees. But this is for those whose minds (*ātmanām*) are spotless (*amala*), devoid of such contaminations as envy, whereas I am full of contamination. Nevertheless, by appearing here in person You have shown the quality of Your wonderful mercy (*vicitra-kṛpā-caritram*).”

|| 10.86.47 ||

hṛdi-stho ’py ati-dūra-sthaḥ karma-vikṣipta-cetasām

ātma-śaktibhir agrāhyo ’py anty upeta-guṇātmanām

TRANSLATION

But although You reside within the heart, You are very far away from those whose minds are disturbed by their entanglement in material work. Indeed, no one can grasp You by his material powers, for You reveal Yourself only in the hearts of those who have learned to appreciate Your transcendental qualities.

COMMENTARY

Śrutadeva continued, “Moreover, I have noticed You display other wonderful qualities. Though You reside in the hearts (*hṛdi-stho*) of both the devotees and non-devotees, You are visible to the devotees and invisible to the non-devotees.”

Kṛṣṇa replied, “How is it possible for Me to be both in their hearts and also far away?”

Śrutadeva answered, “You are very far away (*ati-dūra-sthaḥ*) from those immersed in ignorance, with its covering of pride and envy. But You are very near (*anty*), and can be easily realized by those humble souls who forever think of Your qualities in their hearts (*upeta-guṇātmanām*).”

|| 10.86.48 ||

namo 'stu te 'dhyātma-vidāṁ parātmane anātmane svātma-vibhakta-mṛtyave

sa-kāraṇākāraṇa-liṅgam īyuṣe sva-māyayāsaṁvṛta-ruddha-dṛṣṭaye

TRANSLATION

Let me offer my obeisances unto You. You are realized as the Supreme Soul by those who know the Absolute Truth, whereas in Your form of time You impose death upon the forgetful souls. You appear both in Your causeless spiritual form and in the created form of this universe, thus simultaneously uncovering the eyes of Your devotees and obstructing the vision of the nondevotees.

COMMENTARY

Elaborating on the idea already expressed, Śrutadeva offers his respects: "I offer respects to Kṛṣṇa, who the *sānta-bhaktas* (devotees in the mood of neutral admiration), meditate on as having a divine personal form (*ātmā:śrī-vigrahaḥ*), which is supreme and trans-cendental to *māyā*. O Kṛṣṇa, the impersonal philosophers (*jñānīs*) conceive of You as formless (*anātmā*). In Your form as time (*sva-ātma*) You appear as death to the envious demons. By appearing both in Your causeless spiritual form made of unlimited, transcen-dental knowledge and bliss, and in the material universal form (*sa-kāraṇaṁ liṇgam:virāṭ-rūpa*), You simultaneously uncover the eyes of Your devotees and obstruct the vision of the nondevotees."

|| 10.86.49 ||

sa tvaṁ śādhi sva-bhṛtyān naḥ kiṁ deva karavāma he

etad-anto nṛṇāṁ kleśo yad bhavān akṣi-gocaraḥ

TRANSLATION

O Lord, You are that Supreme Soul, and we are Your servants. How shall we serve You? My Lord, simply seeing You puts an end to all the troubles of human life.

COMMENTARY

"Please instruct (*śādhi:anuśikṣaya*) me."

|| 10.86.50 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

tad-uktam ity upākarṇya bhagavān praṇatārti-hā

gṛhītvā pāṇinā pāṇiṁ prahasaṁs tam uvāca ha

TRANSLATION

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: After hearing Śrutadeva speak these words, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who relieves His surrendered devotees' distress, took Śrutadeva's hand in His own and, smiling, spoke to him as follows.

COMMENTARY

The phrase *grhītvā pāṇinā pāṇiṁ*, "taking his hand in His own" implies that Kṛṣṇa intended, by making Śrutadeva hear His clever words, to drown him in *sakhya-rasa*. Kṛṣṇa smiled broadly (*prahasaṁs*) to indicate, "Yes, you know the truth about Me, and I also know all about you. So now I will tell you something special."

|| 10.86.51 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

brahmaṁs te 'nugrahārthāya samprāptān viddhy amūn munīn

sañcaranti mayā lokān punantaḥ pāda-reṇubhiḥ

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord said: My dear brāhmaṇa, you should know that these great sages have come here just to bless you. They travel throughout the worlds with Me, purifying them with the dust of their feet.

COMMENTARY

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said, "I have heard you praise Me but not the *brāhmaṇas* accompanying Me. Being favorable to the *brāhmaṇas*, I will perso-nally praise them in order to teach devotion to the *brāhmaṇas*." By saying this Kṛṣṇa implies, "Even though I am Your object of praise, the *brāhmaṇas* are Mine." By addressing Śrutadeva with *brahmams*, "O *brāhmaṇa*" Kṛṣṇa indicates that since Śrutadeva himself is a *brāhmaṇa*, he need not show as much respect as He does.

|| 10.86.52 ||

devāḥ kṣetrāṇi tīrthāni darśana-sparśanārcanaiḥ

śanaiḥ punanti kālena tad apy arhattamekṣayā

TRANSLATION

One can gradually become purified by seeing, touching and worshiping temple deities, places of pilgrimage and holy rivers. But one can attain the same result immediately simply by receiving the glance of exalted sages.

COMMENTARY

"Moreover, the *brāhmaṇas*, who immediately purify one just by their *darśana*, are even greater than temple deities who slowly purify one." This is confirmed in the words of the sons of King Prācīnabarhi:

teṣāṁ vicaratāṁ padbhyāṁ tīrthānāṁ pāvanecchayā

bhītasya kiṁ na roceta tāvakānāṁ samāgamaḥ

"Dear Lord, Your devotees wander all over the world to purify even the holy places of pilgrimage. Is not such activity pleasing to those who are actually afraid of material existence?" (SB 4.30.37)

|| 10.86.53 ||

brāhmaṇo janmanā śreyān sarveṣām prāṇinām iha

tapasā vidyayā tuṣṭyā kim u mat-kalayā yutaḥ

TRANSLATION

By his very birth, a brāhmaṇa is the best of all living beings in this world, and he becomes even more exalted when he is endowed with austerity, learning and self-satisfaction, what to speak of devotion to Me.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa continued, "By birth, austerity, peace and knowledge the *brāhmaṇa* is the best of all living entities. He is even more so when he has attained direct realization of Me by intensely worshiping Me."

|| 10.86.54 ||

na brāhmaṇān me dayitaṁ rūpam etac catur-bhujam

sarva-veda-mayo vipraḥ sarva-deva-mayo hy aham

TRANSLATION

Even My own four-armed form is no dearer to Me than a brāhmaṇa. Within himself a learned brāhmaṇa comprises all the Vedas, just as within Myself I comprise all the demigods.

COMMENTARY

The phrase *sarva-veda-mayo vipraḥ* means that the *brāhmaṇa* sages, who are the *Vedas* personified, can reveal Kṛṣṇa who embodies all the demigods and *viṣṇu-tattva* expansions of Nārāyana.

|| 10.86.55 ||

duṣprajñā aviditvaivam avajānanty asūyavaḥ

guruṁ māṁ vipram ātmānam arcādāv ijya-dṛṣṭayaḥ

TRANSLATION

Ignorant of this truth, foolish people neglect and enviously offend a learned brāhmaṇa, who, being nondifferent from Me, is their spiritual master and very self. They consider worshipable only such obvious manifestations of divinity as My Deity form.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, "Foolish people who are ignorant of this truth find fault (*asūyavaḥ*) with *brāhmaṇas*, and think that deities are worshipable but not *brāhmaṇas*."

|| 10.86.56 ||

carācaram idaṁ viśvaṁ bhāvā ye cāsya hetavaḥ

mad-rūpāṇīti cetasy ādhatte vipro mad-īkṣayā

TRANSLATION

Because he has realized Me, a brāhmaṇa is firmly fixed in the knowledge that everything moving and nonmoving in the universe, and also the primary elements of its creation, are all manifest forms expanded from Me.

COMMENTARY

This verse describes the qualities of the *brāhmaṇa*. Kṛṣṇa said, “Special *brāhmaṇas* like Nārada Muni, who are endowed with direct realization of Me (*mad-īkṣayā*), know that this universe and its causes (*hetavah*), the primary elements (*bhāvāḥ*) such as *mahat-tattva*, are all manifest forms expanded from Me.”

|| 10.86.57 ||

tasmād brahma-ṛṣīn etān brahman mac-chraddhayārcaya

evaṁ ced arcito ’smy addhā nānyathā bhūri-bhūtibhiḥ

TRANSLATION

Therefore you should worship these brāhmaṇa sages, O brāhmaṇa, with the same faith you have in Me. If you do so, you will worship Me directly, which you cannot do otherwise, even with offerings of vast riches.

|| 10.86.58 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

sa itthaṁ prabhunādiṣṭaḥ saha-kṛṣṇān dvijottamān

ārādhyaikātma-bhāvena maithilaś cāpa sad-gatim

TRANSLATION

Śrī Śuka said: So instructed by his Lord, with single-minded devotion Śrutadeva worshiped Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the topmost brāhmaṇas accompanying Him, and King Bahulāśva did the same. Thus both Śrutadeva and the King attained the ultimate transcendental destination.

COMMENTARY

Śrutadeva then worshiped Kṛṣṇa and the sages with undivided attention (*aikātma-bhāvena*). Or another meaning is: he worshiped Kṛṣṇa and the sages with the understanding that they were non-different.

|| 10.86.59 ||

evaṁ sva-bhaktayo rājan bhagavān bhakta-bhaktimān

uṣitvādiśya san-mārgaṁ punar dvāravatīm agāt

TRANSLATION

O King, thus the Personality of Godhead, who is devoted to His own devotees, stayed for some time with His two great devotees Śrutadeva and Bahulāśva, teaching them the behavior of perfect saints. Then the Lord returned to Dvārakā.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa stayed with these two devotees and taught them the path of devotion (*mārgam*) practiced by the realized souls (*sat*), and then returned to Dvārakā.

Thus ends the commentary on the Eighty-sixth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Chapter Eighty-seven

Prayers by the Personified Vedas

|| 10.87.1 ||

śrī-parīkṣid uvāca

brahman brahmaṇy anirdeśye nirguṇe guṇa-vṛttayaḥ

kathaṁ caranti śrutayaḥ sākṣāt sad-asataḥ pare

TRANSLATION

Śrī Parīkṣit said: O brāhmaṇa, how can the Vedas directly describe the Supreme Absolute Truth, who cannot be described in words? The Vedas are limited to describing the qualities of material nature, but the Supreme is devoid of these qualities, being transcendental to all material manifestations and their causes.

COMMENTARY

All glories to Śrī Govinda! In this chapter the superiority of Kṛṣṇa's form over all others is indicated by the *Vedas* personified. Nārada hears this from Śrī Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi and then explains it to his disciple, Śrīla Vyāsadeva.

Let me offer the following invocation:

mama ratna-vaṇig-bhāvaṁ ratnāny aparicinvataḥ |
hasantu santo jihremi na sva-svānta-vinoda-kṛt ||

"The saintly devotees may laugh at me for becoming a jewel merchant though I know nothing about precious jewels. But I feel no shame, for at least I may entertain them."

na me 'sti vaiduṣy api nāpi bhaktir virakti-raktir na tathāpi laulyāt
su-durgamād eva bhavāmi veda-stuty-artha-cintāmaṇi-rāśi-gṛdhnuḥ

"Though I have no wisdom, devotion or detachment from material energy, I am still greedy to take the touchstone of the Vedas' prayers from the fortress in which it is being kept."

māṁ nīcatāyām aviveka-vāyuḥ

pravartate pātayituṁ balāc cet

likhāmy ataḥ svāmī-sanātana-śrī-

kṛṣṇāṅghri-bhā-stambha-kṛtāvalambaḥ

"If the wind of indiscretion—my failure to acknowledge my lowly position—threatens to knock me down, then while writing this commentary I must hold on to the effulgent pillars of the feet of Śrīdhara Svāmī, Sanātana Gosvāmī and Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa."

praṇamya śrī-guruṁ bhūyaḥ śrī-kṛṣṇaṁ karuṇārṇavam |
loka-nāthaṁ jagac-cakṣuḥ śrī-śukaṁ tam upāśraye ||

"Repeatedly bowing down to my divine spiritual master and to Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the ocean of mercy, I take shelter of Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī, the protector of the world and its universal eye."

At the end of the preceding chapter, Śukadeva Gosvāmī told Parīkṣit Mahārāja, *evaṁ sva-bhaktayo rājan bhagavān bhakta-bhaktimān uṣitvādiśya san-mārgaṁ punar dvāravatīm agāt*, "Thus, O King, the Personality of Godhead, who is the devotee of His own devotees, stayed for some time with His two great devotees, teaching them how perfect saints behave. Then He returned to Dvārakā."

In this verse the word *san-mārgam* can be understood in at least three ways. In the first, *sat* is taken to mean "devotee of the Supreme Lord," and thus *san-mārgam* means "the path of *bhakti-yoga*, devotional service." In the second, with *sat* meaning "a seeker of transcendental knowledge," *san-mārgam* means "the path of *jñāna-yoga*," which has impersonal Brahman as its object. And in the third, with *sat* referring to the transcendental sound of the *Vedas*, *san-mārgam* means "the process of following Vedic

injunctions." Both the second and the third of these interpretations of *san-mārgam* lead to Parīkṣit's question of how the *Vedas* can describe the Absolute Truth.

"Brahman cannot be defined (*anirdeśya*) because it has no class, substance, quality or action (*jāti, dravya, guṇa, kriyā*) Therefore, how can the *Vedas* indicate Brahman by direct meaning (*sākṣāt*), rather than by indirect reference? Brahman is beyond qualities (*nirguṇa*); it is beyond substance (*sat*) such as earth, and beyond the action of an object, whose nature is incomplete (*asat*). It is also beyond class (*jāti*), since that inheres in substance, action and quality."

Or the statement can mean "Brahman is beyond substance (*sat*) and everything else which is not substance (class and actions:*asat*). How can the *Vedas*, whose existence depends on class, substance and actions, or in other words the aspects of quality (*guṇa-vṛttayaḥ*), deal with this Brahman which is devoid of class, object, quality and action?"

In philosophy, *padarthas* or real things are enumerated: substance (*dravya*) such as earth. water, fire, time and space; quality (*guṇa*) such as color, taste and smell; action of objects (*kriyā*) and prototype or genus (*jāti*) such as human-ness, cow-ness and so on. Different philosophies will add or subtract items from this list. Impersonalists admit only one *padartha*, namely Brahman. Thus King Parīkṣit is puzzled as to how the words (supposedly material) of the Vedas can directly describe the Absolute Truth, the transcendental, Supreme Brahman.

|| 10.87.2 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

buddhīndriya-manaḥ-prāṇān janānām asṛjat prabhuḥ

mātrārthaṁ ca bhavārthaṁ ca ātmane 'kalpanāya ca

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvamī said: The Supreme Lord manifested the material intelligence, senses, mind and vital air of the living entities so that they could indulge their desires for sense gratification, take repeated births to engage in fruitive activities, become elevated in future lives and ultimately attain liberation.

COMMENTARY

This is the reply: "The Lord (*prabhuḥ*) created the intelligence, mind, senses and *prāṇa* of the jīvas (*janānām*) for their enjoyment (*mātrārthaṁ*) of perceivable objects arising from their *karma*, and for their causing actions leading to repeated births

(*bhavārthaṁ*). He did this so that the *jīvas* would make an offering (*kalpanāya*) of their intelligence, mind, senses and prana to the Lord in the form of Brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān (*ātmane*)"

Or another meaning is: "The Lord did this in order to make the jīvas use their mind, intelligence, senses and *prāṇas* to worship Him." The word *ca* "and" is repeated three times to show the importance of all of what the Lord provides—not only the path of liberation, but also the paths of gradual elevation through religious life and appropriate sense enjoyment.

The meaning is this: "In all their endeavors the living entities depend on Kṛṣṇa's mercy for success. Without intelligence, senses, mind and vital air, the living entities cannot achieve anything—neither elevation to heaven, purification through *jñāna* (knowledge) with its limbs of mind control (*sama*) and sense control (*dama*), perfection of the eightfold meditational *yoga* system, nor pure devotion through following the process of *bhakti-yoga* beginning with hearing and chanting the names of God."

But, it may be questioned, "Your answer is like saying, 'Today I ate sweet rice' when someone asks 'Where are you going now?' Similarly to the question, 'How are the *Vedas* capable of describing Brahman?' an irrelevant answer has been given: 'The Lord created intelligence, senses, mind and *prāṇas* for the *jivas*' enjoyment and liberation.'"

In answering this objection, we say, "No that is not the case. Answers to subtle questions must often be phrased indirectly. As Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself said to Uddhava: *parokṣa-vādā ṛṣayaḥ parokṣaṁ mama ca priyam*, 'The Vedic seers and *mantras* deal in esoteric terms, and I also am pleased by such confidential descriptions.' (SB 11.21.35) Therefore, it is quite appropriate that in replying to this direct question the answer has been given through hidden suggestion."

The impersonalists cannot appreciate the direct answer, so instead Śukadeva Gosvāmī gives an indirect reply: "You impersonalists say that the transcendental Brahman is indescribable by words. But if Kṛṣṇa had not created the intelligence, mind and senses, then sound and the other objects of perception would all be just as indescribable as your Brahman. Henceforward, for a person like you, who has been blind and deaf since birth, all physical sounds and forms are inconceivable, what to speak of Brahman. Just as Kṛṣṇa has given us all faculties of perception for experiencing and describing to others the sensations of sight, sound, smell, touch and taste, in the same way He may mercifully give someone the ability to realize Brahman. If Kṛṣṇa chooses, He may create some extraordinary way for words to function—apart from their ordinary references to material substances, qualities, categories and actions—that may make even Brahman expressible by words. After all, Kṛṣṇa is the almighty Lord (*prabhuḥ*), and He can easily make the indescribable describable."

In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (8.24.38), Lord Matsya assures King Satyavrata that the Absolute Truth can be known from the words of the *Vedas*:

> *madīyaṁ mahimānaṁ ca paraṁ brahmeti śabditam*
>
> *vetsyasy anugrahītaṁ me sampraśnair vivṛtaṁ hṛdi*
>
> "You will be thoroughly advised and favored by Me, and because of your inquiries, everything about My glories, which are known as *paraṁ brahma*, will be manifest within your heart. Thus you will know everything about Me."

Someone may ask, "But how will I know it?"

Lord Matsya replies, "You will know Brahman directly, defined by sound (*śabditam:sākśāt sabda-nirdiśṭī-kṛtam*) manifesting as the statements of great sages recorded in the Vedic literatures which say 'Brahman is like this,' in answer to your question 'What is Brahman like?' Only by receiving My mercy (*anugrahītaṁ:prasādī-kṛtam*) is it possible to realize Brahman through the words of the *Vedas*."

One should not interpret this verse spoken by Matsya to mean some indirect or metaphorical understanding of Brahman. Otherwise, the words "by My mercy" would be meaningless. If it were indirect understanding, then the word *śabditam* (expressed through sound) also becomes meaningless.

In the same way as Lord Matsya said, "By My grace you will directly realize that Brahman in your heart," similarly, by the mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna was also able to directly perceive the impersonal Brahman. The *Śrī Hari-vaṁsa* narrates the story of the kidnapping of the learned *brāhmaṇa's* sons wherein Kṛṣṇa said to Arjuna: "O best of the Bhāratas! The brilliant, divine and vast Brahman which you have now seen is none other than Myself, because it is My eternal effulgence. It constitutes My everlasting spiritual energy, manifest and unmanifest. The most expert *yogīs* of this world become liberated on entering it. It is the supreme goal of those practicing Sāṅkhya, *yoga* and austerity. That supreme, transcendental Brahman has manifested all the differentiated varieties of this world. You should know it to be the total amalgamation of My power."

Or another meaning of the answer is as follows. "O king! The *Vedas* never delineate the impersonal Brahman. Lord Brahmā says *śabdo na yatra puru-kārakavān kriyārtho*, 'Brahman is beyond sound.' (SB 2.7.47) Thus the *Vedas* cannot touch upon the Brahman in His personal *sac-cid-ānanda* form because He is transcendental to

mundane terms like substance, class, quality and action. Furthermore, the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (1.9.44) says: *sattvādayo na santiśe yatra ca prākṛtā guṇāḥ*, 'The material modes of goodness and so on do not exist within the Supreme Lord.' From this absence of mundane qualities, however, one can deduce that there must be transcendental qualities within Kṛṣṇa. And the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad's* (6.11) saying: *sāksī cetāḥ kevalo nirguṇas ca*, 'He is the unique, fully aware witness without material qualities,' indicates that *nirguna* must mean only without material qualities since being a witness is a quality. The *smṛti Bhagavad-gītā* says: *vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedyaḥ*, 'I am known by the *Vedas*.' (15.15)

"It can be understood from this statement that since the Lord possesses spiritual varieties, qualities, forms and actions, which can be expressed through the function of sound, the *Vedas* can directly describe that Lord who has infinite spiritual qualities."

The word *buddhi* in the present verse indicates the *mahat-tattva*, from which evolve the various expansions of ether such as sound which are designated here as *indriya*. *Mātrārtham* then means "for the sake of using transcendental sound to describe Brahman," since for that precise purpose Śrī Kṛṣṇa inspired *prakṛti* to evolve ether and sound.

Therefore the second meaning is as follows: "Śrī Kṛṣṇa creates the *mahat-tattva*, the senses, sense objects, elements, mind and *prāṇa* for their functioning in relation to the soul (*ātmane*) and for the welfare of the *jīvas*. Thus a person can engage the spiritual (in the case of the perfected devotee) and material (in the case of the practicing devotee), intelligence, mind, senses and vital energy (*buddhi, mana, indriya, prāṇa*) in the worship of the Lord."

"*Mātrā*" can mean "function, division, place or ear ornament" according to the teachings. The word "*bhava*" can mean "auspiciousness, Śiva or attainment." Because speaking is not possible without the *prāṇa*, mind and senses, they are created for the function of speaking.

The *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* (Pūrva 12) says:

> *sat-puṇḍarīka-nayanaṁ meghābhaṁ vaidyutāmbaram*
>
> *dvi-bhujaṁ mauna-mudrāḍhyaṁ vana-mālinam īśvaram*
>
> "The Supreme Lord, appearing in His two-armed form, had divine lotus eyes, a complexion the color of a cloud, and garments that resembled lightning. He wore a garland of forest flowers, and His beauty was enhanced by His pose of meditative silence."

In this context, the transcendental intelligence and senses of the *siddha* (perfected, devotee) can correctly perceive Kṛṣṇa's purely spiritual beauty. It is his realizations that are echoed in the *Gopāla-tāpanī's* comparison of Kṛṣṇa's eyes, body and clothing to a lotus, a cloud and lightning. For the *sādhaka* (neophyte devotee), however, Śrī Kṛṣṇa's spiritual eyes, body and clothing are not actually perceivable to his intelligence and senses. Nevertheless, by reading verses such as this one from the *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad*, the *sādhaka* thinks of the wonderful beauty of Kṛṣṇa. Concentrating his mind in this way, he gradually becomes joyful under the impression that he is meditating on the Lord, though he is not fully realized and cannot even meditate steadily on the effulgence surrounding Kṛṣṇa's transcendental body.

But Śrī Kṛṣṇa on the other hand, being moved by the waves of His boundless mercy, thinks "Oh how wonderful that My devotee is meditating on Me." Then when the *sādhaka's* devotion matures Kṛṣṇa brings that beloved devotee to His feet and engages him in confidential service. Thus it is concluded that only by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa can the *Vedas* convey the transcendental form and identity of the Lord.

|| 10.87.3 ||

saiṣā hy upaniṣad brāhmī pūrveśāṁ pūrva-jair dhṛtā

śrraddhayā dhārayed yas tāṁ kṣemaṁ gacched akiñcanaḥ

TRANSLATION

Those who came before even our ancient predecessors meditated upon this same confidential knowledge of the Absolute Truth. Indeed, anyone who faithfully concentrates on this knowledge will become free from material attachments and attain the final goal of life.

COMMENTARY

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said, "These two famous verses (1, 2) in the form of a question and answer can be considered an *Upaniṣad* on the topic of Brahman (*Brahmopaniṣad*). These verses were not created by us, but simply made their appearance, because this *Upaniṣad* was spoken previously by Nārada Muni, who himself heard it from Sanaka Kumāra."

|| 10.87.4 ||

atra te varṇayiṣyāmi gāthāṁ nārāyaṇānvitām

nāradasya ca saṁvādam ṛṣer nārāyaṇasya ca

TRANSLATION

In this connection I will relate to you a narration concerning the Supreme Lord Nārāyaṇa. It is about a conversation that once occurred between Śrī Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi and Nārada Muni.

COMMENTARY

To reinforce Parīkṣit's faith in his words, Śukadeva Gosvāmī said, "Concerning this subject, I will tell the history (*gāthāṁ:itihāsam*) in the form of a dialogue which shows Nārāyaṇa as supreme."

|| 10.87.5 ||

ekadā nārado lokān paryaṭan bhagavat-priyaḥ

sanātanam ṛṣiṁ draṣṭuṁ yayau nārāyaṇāśramam

TRANSLATION

Once, while traveling among the various planets of the universe, the Lord's beloved devotee Nārada went to visit the primeval sage Nārāyaṇa at His āśrama.

COMMENTARY

Nārada went to see the eternally (*sanātanam*) liberated Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi, the son of Dharma.

|| 10.87.6 ||

yo vai bhārata-varṣe 'smin kṣemāya svastaye nṛṇām

dharma-jñāna-śamopetam ā-kalpād āsthitas tapaḥ

TRANSLATION

From the very beginning of Brahmā's day Lord Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi has been undergoing austere penances in this land of Bhārata while perfectly performing religious duties and exemplifying spiritual knowledge and self-control—all for the benefit of human beings in both this world and the next.

COMMENTARY

Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi has been performing austerities from the beginning of the first day of Brahmā (*ākalpāt*) for the welfare of men now (*kṣemāya*) and in the next life (*svastaye*).

|| 10.87.7 ||

tatropaviṣṭam ṛṣibhiḥ kalāpa-grāma-vāsibhiḥ

parītaṁ praṇato 'pṛcchad idam eva kurūdvaha

TRANSLATION

There Nārada approached Lord Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi, who was sitting amidst sages of the village of Kalāpa. After bowing down to the Lord, O hero of the Kurus, Nārada asked Him the very same question you have asked me.

COMMENTARY

Nārada offered his respects to Nārāyaṇa who was seated there, and asked about this topic: "O *brāhmaṇa*, how can the *śrutis* describe the indescribable Brahman?"

|| 10.87.8 ||

tasmai hy avocad bhagavān ṛṣīṇāṁ śṛṇvatām idam

yo brahma-vādaḥ pūrveṣāṁ jana-loka-nivāsinām

TRANSLATION

As the sages listened, Lord Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi related to Nārada an ancient discussion about the Absolute Truth that took place among the residents of Janaloka.

COMMENTARY

The Supreme Lord, seated among sages, told Nārada about how the sages on Janaloka had previously discussed this topic of the Absolute Truth.

|| 10.87.9 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

svāyambhuva brahma-satraṁ jana-loke 'bhavat purā

tatra-sthānāṁ mānasānāṁ munīnām ūrdhva-retasām

TRANSLATION

The Personality of Godhead said: O son of self-born Brahmā, once long ago on Janaloka, wise sages who resided there performed a great sacrifice to the Absolute Truth by vibrating transcendental sounds. These sages, mental sons of Brahmā, were all perfect celibates.

COMMENTARY

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said, “O son of Brahmā (*svāyambhuva*), the qualified inhabitants of Janaloka, the mental sons of Lord Brahmā, previously held a discussion on Brahman.” The word *satraṁ* here refers to a Vedic sacrifice in which all the participants are equally qualified to serve as priests. When all of them can speak equally well on the topic of Brahman it is called a brahma satra.

|| 10.87.10 ||

śvetadvīpaṁ gatavati tvayi draṣṭuṁ tad-īśvaram

brahma-vādaḥ su-saṁvṛttaḥ śrutayo yatra śerate

tatra hāyam abhūt praśnas tvaṁ māṁ yam anupṛcchasi

TRANSLATION

At that time you happened to be visiting the Lord on Śvetadvīpa—that Supreme Lord in whom the Vedas lie down to rest during the period of universal annihilation. A lively discussion arose among the sages on Janaloka as to the nature of the Supreme Absolute Truth. Indeed, the same question arose then that you are asking Me now.

COMMENTARY

Nārada asked, “Where did I go? Why I did not know about it?”

Lord Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi answered, “You went to Śvetadvīpa to see Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣnu. The same question arose then that you are asking Me now.”

|| 10.87.11 ||

tulya-śruta-tapaḥ-śīlās tulya-svīyāri-madhyamāḥ

api cakruḥ pravacanam ekaṁ śuśrūṣavo ’pare

TRANSLATION

Although these sages were all equally qualified in terms of Vedic study and austerity, and although they all saw friends, enemies and neutral parties equally, they chose one of their number to be the speaker, and the rest became eager listeners.

COMMENTARY

Nārada said, “But since all of them were filled with knowledge, who became the speaker and who asked the questions?” In this verse, Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi answers, “Since

there was no difference in their learning, austerity and character, and although they all saw friends, enemies and neutral parties equally, they randomly chose one of their members to be the speaker and the rest asked questions.”

|| 10.87.12-13 ||

śrī-sanandana uvāca

sva-sṛṣṭam idam āpīya śayānaṁ saha śaktibhiḥ

tad-ante bodhayāṁ cakrus tal-liṅgaiḥ śrutayaḥ param

yathā śayānaṁ saṁrājaṁ vandinas tat-parākramaiḥ

pratyūṣe ’bhetya su-ślokair bodhayanty anujīvinaḥ

TRANSLATION

Śrī Sanandana replied: After the Supreme Lord withdrew the universe He had previously created, He lay for some time as if asleep, and all His energies rested dormant within Him. When the time came for the next creation, the personified Vedas awakened Him by chanting His glories, just as the poets serving a king approach him at dawn and awaken him by reciting his heroic deeds.

COMMENTARY

According to the words of Śukadeva, the question that Parīkṣit asked in verse one: “How can the *Vedas* directly describe the Supreme Absolute Truth, who cannot be described in words? (*brahmaṇy anirdeśye*)” was previously asked by Nārada to Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi (verse seven), and, according to the statement of Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi, the same question was asked first on Janaloka by Sanaka and other sages to Sananda.

Then Sananda, speaking from the Uttara portion of the *Brahmopaniṣad*, replied with the second verse of this chapter (*buddhīndriya-manaḥ-prāṇān*). In relation to that, in the present verse, he then recited a history in order to establish that the *śrutis* are self proven, the original proof. After destroying the universe He Himself created (*sva-sṛṣṭam idam*), the Lord lay in *yoga-nidra* like a sleeping person. Then at the end of this period, at the time of creation, the *Vedas* woke Him up with words describing His characteristics (*tal liṅgaiḥ*). Even though the *Vedas* knew that the Lord, being omniscient, does not need to be informed of His glories, they enthusiastically took this opportunity to praise Him.

|| 10.87.14 ||

śrī-śrutaya ūcuḥ

jaya jaya jahy ajām ajita doṣa-gṛbhīta-guṇāṁ

tvam asi yad ātmanā samavaruddha-samasta-bhagaḥ

aga-jagad-okasām akhila-śakty-avabodhaka te

kvacid ajayātmanā ca carato 'nucaren nigamaḥ

TRANSLATION

The śrutis said: Victory, victory to You, O unconquerable one! By Your very nature You are perfectly full in all opulences; therefore please defeat the eternal power of illusion, who assumes control over the modes of nature to create difficulties for conditioned souls. O You who awaken all the energies of the moving and nonmoving embodied beings, sometimes the Vedas can recognize You as You sport with Your material and spiritual potencies.

COMMENTARY

The *śrutis* said, "O unconquerable Lord! May You remain in all Your glories (*jaya jaya*), and reveal all Your superexcellent qualities." The word *jaya* is repeated out of either reverence or joy.

"How should I reveal My glories?" the Lord might ask.

Śrutis: "Be merciful to all the moving and non-moving living beings by destroying their ignorance and helping them to attain the sweetness of Your lotus feet."

Lord Mahā-viṣṇu: "But Māyā, who imposes ignorance on the jīvas, is full of good qualities (*gṛbhīta-guṇām*), so how does she prevent the jīvas from attaining Me?

Śrutis: "With the three modes of nature she bewilders the conditioned souls and makes them falsely identify with their material bodies." Another meaning: "Moreover, *māyā's* modes of goodness, passion and ignorance produce *anarthas* (*doṣa-gṛbhīta*) which are not favorable for attainment of Your lotus feet." In the word "*gṛbhīta*," *bh* is substituted for *h* (*gṛhita*), as is permitted in prayers. "Only You cannot be conquered (*ajita*) by *māyā*, whereas others like Brahmā are vanquished by their own faults."

Lord Mahā-viṣṇu: "But what proof do you have that she cannot conquer Me?"

Śrutis: "The proof lies in the fact that in Your original state (*ātmanā:svarūpa*) You have already realized the perfection of all opulences."

Lord Mahā-viṣṇu: “But even if ignorance slackens, I am not attained without devotional service, as I Myself have stated: *bhaktyāham ekayā grāhyaḥ*, ‘I am obtained only by unalloyed devotion.’” (SB 11.14.21)

Śrutis: “My Lord, O You who awaken all energies, after creating the intelligence and senses of the living entities You inspire them to work hard and enjoy the fruits of their labor. In addition, by Your mercy You awaken their ability to pursue the progressive paths of knowledge, mystic *yoga* and devotional service, which enable them to advance toward You in Your aspects of Brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān respectively. When *jñāna, yoga* and *bhakti* mature, You empower the living beings to directly realize You in each of Your three aspects.”

Mahā-viṣṇu: “What authoritative evidence do you have to support this statement?”

Śrutis: “We ourselves are the evidence. On some occasions—such as now, the time of creation—You consort with Your external, Māyā potency, whereas You are always present with Your internal energy. It is at times such as the present, when Your activity is outwardly manifest, that we, the *Vedas*, can recognize You in Your play. Therefore the statement of the *Brahma Upaniṣad* is correct in saying that You created the senses, mind and intelligence for the benefit of the *jīvas.*”

In many places the *Vedas* glorify the transcendental, personal qualities of the Supreme Lord: *nityaṁ vijñānam ānandaṁ brahma*, “The Absolute Truth is eternal knowledge and bliss.” (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 3.9.28) The following verse appears in the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (6.11), the *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* (Uttara 97), and the *Brahma Upaniṣad* (4.1):

> *eko devaḥ sarva-bhūteṣu gūḍhaḥ sarva-vyāpī sarva-bhūtāntarātmā*
>
> *karmādhyakṣaḥ sarva-bhūtādhivāsaḥ sākṣī cetāḥ kevalo nirguṇaś ca*
>
> “The one Supreme Lord lives hidden inside all created things. He pervades all matter and sits within the hearts of all living beings. As the indwelling Supersoul, He supervises their material activities. Thus, while having no material qualities Himself, He is the unique witness and giver of consciousness.”

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s personal qualities are further described in the following quotations from the *Upaniṣads*: *Yaḥ sarva-jñaḥ sa sarva-vid yasya jñāna-mayaṁ tapaḥ*. “He who is all-knowing, from whom the potency of all knowledge comes—He is the wisest of all” (*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 1.1.9); *sarvasya vaśī sarvasyeśānaḥ*: “He is the Lord and controller of everyone” (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4.4.22); and *yaḥ pṛthivyāṁ tiṣṭhan pṛthivyā āntaro yaṁ pṛthivī na veda*: “He who resides within the earth and pervades it, whom the earth does not know.” (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 3.7.3)

Lord Viṣṇu's role in creation is mentioned in many statements of the śruti. The *Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad* (1.2.4) states, *so 'kāmayata*

bahu syām: "He desired, I will become many." The phrase *so 'kāmayata* (He desired) here implies that the Lord's personality is eternal, for even prior to the creation the Absolute Truth experi-enced desire, and desire is an attribute unique to persons.

The *Aitareya Upaniṣad* (3.11) similarly states, *sa aikṣata tat-tejo 'sṛjata*: "He saw and His power sent forth the creation." Here the word *tat-tejaḥ* refers to the Lord's partial expansion Mahā-Viṣṇu, who glances upon Māyā and thus manifests the material creation. Or *tat-tejaḥ* may refer to the Lord's impersonal Brahman feature, His potency of all-pervasive, eternal existence. As described in *Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.40):

yasya prabhā prabhavato jagad-aṇḍa-koṭi-

koṭiṣv aśeṣa-vasudhādi-vibhūti-bhinnam

tad brahma niṣkalam anantam aśeṣa-bhūtaṁ

govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi

"I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who is endowed with great power. The glowing effulgence of His transcendental form is the impersonal Brahman, which is absolute, complete and unlimited and which displays the varieties of countless planets, with their different opulences, in millions and millions of universes."

madīyaṁ mahimānaṁ ca paraṁ brahmeti śabditam

vetsyasy anugṛhītaṁ me sampraśnair vivṛtaṁ hṛdi

"You will be thoroughly advised and favored by Me, and because of your inquiries, everything about My glories, which are known as *paraṁ brahma*, will be manifest within your heart. Thus you will know everything about Me." (SB 8.24.38)

satyaṁ jñānam anantaṁ yad brahma-jyotiḥ sanātanam

yad dhi paśyanti munayo guṇāpāye samāhitāḥ

"Śrī Kṛṣṇa revealed the indestructible spiritual effulgence, which is unlimited, conscious and eternal. Sages see that spiritual existence in trance, when their consciousness is free of the modes of material nature."(SB 10.28.15)

brahmano hi pratiṣṭāham, amṛtasyāvyayasya ca

śāśvatasya ca dharmasya, sukhasyaikāntikasya ca

"And I am the basis of the impersonal Brahman, which is immortal, imperishable, and eternal and is the constitutional position of ultimate happiness." (Bg. 14.27) These statements show Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa as Brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān, and their relationship.

Yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante yena jātāni jīvanti yat

prayanty abhisaṁ-viśanti tad brahma tad vijijñāsasva

"He from whom this cosmic manifestation has emanated, and in whom everything will merge after annihilation." (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 3.1) This verse shows Lord Visnu's creative aspect.

Such statements as: *akśayyaṁ ha vai cāturmasya-yājinaḥ sukrtam bhavati*, "One who has worshiped by means of the vows of Cāturmāsya attains pious credits which never become depleted," validate the process of *karma*. Such statements as *brahma-vid āpnoti param iti*, "Attaining knowledge of Brahman one attains the supreme" (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 2.1.1), and *tam eva viditvāti mṛtyum eti*, "By realizing Him one transcends death" (*Svetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 3.8) validate the process of *jñāna*.

śataṁ caikā ca hṛdayasya nāḍyas, tāsāṁ mūrdhānam abhiniḥsṛtaikā, tayordhvam āyann amṛtatvam eti, viśvag anyā utkramaṇe bhavanti

"There are one hundred and one subtle nerve channels (*nāḍīs*) which emanate from the heart, by which the soul may quit the body. One of these, the *suśumṇā*, extends to the top of head. By passing up through it one transcends death. The others lead to a variety of destinations." (*Chāndyogya Upaniṣad* 8.6.6) This verse shows the process of *yoga*.

bhaktir evainaṁ nayati, bhaktir evainam darśayati

bhakti-vaśaḥ puruṣo, bhaktir eva bhūyasī

"*Bhakti*, devotional service, alone leads the living entity to Lord Kṛṣṇa, and enables him to see the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is controlled by *bhakti*. *Bhakti* is best of all." (*Māṭhara Śruti*)

sac-cid-ānandaika-rase bhakti-yoge tiṣṭhati, "My humanlike form, which is eternal and full of transcendental knowledge and blissful *rasas*, is revealed when My devotees

serve Me with devotion." (*Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* 2.79) These two verses demonstrate the process of devotional service, bhakti.

|| 10.87.15 ||

bṛhad upalabdham etad avayanty avaśeṣatayā

yata udayāstam-ayau vikṛter mṛdi vāvikṛtāt

ata ṛṣayo dadhus tvayi mano-vacanācaritaṁ

katham ayathā bhavanti bhuvi datta-padāni nṛṇām

TRANSLATION

This perceivable world is identified with the Supreme because the Supreme Brahman is the ultimate foundation of all existence, remaining unchanged as all created things are generated from it and at last dissolved into it, just as clay remains unchanged by the products made from it and again merged with it. Thus it is toward You alone that the Vedic sages direct all their thoughts, words and acts. After all, how can the footsteps of men fail to touch the earth on which they live?

COMMENTARY

Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu said, "But you, the *śrutis*, call not only Me the Supreme Lord but you say that other demigods are the Supreme in verses like the following: *indro yāto 'vasitasya rājā*: 'Indra is the supreme king of all moving and nonmoving beings' (*Ṛg Veda* 1.32.15), and *agnir mūrdhā divaḥ*, 'Agni is the chief of the heavens.' These and other *mantras* point to different deities as the Absolute. It would seem, then, that the *Vedas* present a polytheistic world view."

The *śrutis* replied, "Yes, this is true, but it is a logical necessity that there can be only one source of universal creation, called Brahman or Bṛhat, "the greatest," which is the singular truth underlying and pervading all existence. No finite demigod like Indra or Agni can fulfill this unique role. Lord Viṣṇu alone is the Absolute Truth. Indra and other demigods may be glorified in various ways, but they possess only those powers Lord Śrī Viṣṇu has granted them." With this intention the *śrutis* speak this verse.

The *śrutis* said, "This entire world—including Indra, Agni, and everything else perceivable by the eyes, ears and other senses—is identical with the one Supreme Truth, the Personality of Godhead, who is called Bṛhat, 'the greatest,' because He is *avaśeṣa*, 'the ultimate substance that remains.' There is a famous analogy regarding clay (*mṛdi vā*). A mass of clay is the ingredient cause of various pots, statues and so on, but the clay itself remains in its essence unchanged. Eventually, the pots and other objects will be destroyed and return to the clay from which they came. Similarly, as the Supreme Lord, You are the total ingredient cause, yet You remain eternally untouched by the generation and dissolution of the universe."

Lord Viṣṇu: “Doesn’t that mean that I must be subject to transformation?”

Śrutis: “No. because you are devoid of transformation (*avikṛtāt*). Indeed, it is certainly astonishing that You are not transformed even though You are the ingredient cause of the universe. As the great devotee Gajendra prayed: *namo namas te ’khila-kāraṇāya, niṣkāraṇāyādbhuta-kāraṇāya*, ‘Obeisances again and again to You, the source of all creation. You are the inconceivable cause of all causes, and of You there is no other cause.’ (SB 8.3.15)

“Even the substance clay remains without change while serving as an ingredient cause, and therefore You are not at all transformed while creating, maintaining and destroying the universe. The demigods have confirmed this in such statements as *sṛjasi pāsi harasi*, ‘You create, maintain and annihilate this cosmic manifestation by Yourself.’ We also say the same thing. Although *prakṛti*, material nature, is often considered the ingredient cause of creation, this does not contradict the truth that You are the final cause, since *prakṛti* is Your energy and is herself subject to change. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.24.19) Śrī Kṛṣṇa says,

> *prakṛtir yasyopādānam ādhāraḥ puruṣaḥ paraḥ*
>
> *sato ’bhivyañjakaḥ kālo brahma tat tritayaṁ tv aham*
>
> ‘The material universe is real, having *prakṛti* as its original ingredient and final state. Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu is the resting place of nature, which becomes manifest by the power of time. Thus nature, the almighty Viṣṇu and time are not different from Me, the Supreme Absolute Truth.’

“The material nature undergoes change because she is not Your internal (*svarūpa-bhūta*) energy, which like You is never subject to change. Therefore the sages have directed their minds, words and activities to serving You and meditating upon You alone, rather than to such separated transformations of nature as Indra and other empowered demigods. There is an example to illustrate this point. Just as a man’s footsteps, whether placed on mud, stone or bricks, cannot fail to touch the surface of the earth, so whatever the *Vedas* discuss within the realm of material generation, it is actually You alone, the cause of all and the supreme controller. As the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (6.4.1) affirms in its statements: *vācāraṁbhanaṁ vikāro nāmadheyaṁ mṛttikety eva satyam* , ‘The objects of the material world exist merely as names, transformations defined by language, whereas the ingredient cause, like the clay from which pots are made, is the actual reality,’ and *sarvaṁ khalv idaṁ brahma*, ‘Reality is understood properly when everything is seen to be dependent on Brahman, the Absolute, for its existence.’

Thus the meaning of the verse cited above from the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* beginning *vācāraṁbhanaṁ* is as follows: that which is initiated, a transformation or product (*vikaraḥ: kāryam*). Such a product is named by words (*vācā*) such "pot" or so on, while it is the clay which is the cause (*satyam:kāraṇam*) and reality.

|| 10.87.16 ||

iti tava sūrayas try-adhipate 'khila-loka-mala-

kṣapaṇa-kathāmṛtābdhim avagāhya tapāṁsi jahuḥ

kim uta punaḥ sva-dhāma-vidhutāśaya-kāla-guṇāḥ

parama bhajanti ye padam ajasra-sukhānubhavam

TRANSLATION

Therefore, O master of the three worlds, the wise get rid of all misery by diving deep into the nectarean ocean of topics about You, which washes away all the contamination of the universe. Then what to speak of those who, having by spiritual strength rid their minds of bad habits and freed themselves from time, are able to worship Your true nature, O supreme one, finding within it uninterrupted bliss?

COMMENTARY

By citing the behavior of saintly persons (*sūrayas*) in this verse, the *śrutis* confirm their assertion that Kṛṣṇa is worshipable because He is the Supreme Lord.

The *śrutis* prayed, "O Lord of all in the upper, middle and lower worlds! Because You are the supreme, those with discernment (*surayah*) dive in the nectarean ocean of Your pastimes which destroy the contamination of *karma* even in its subtlest forms (*vāsanā-paryanta*). They abandon the troublesome austerities (*tapāṁsi*) that are part of the process of *jñāna*, and transcend all the miseries of material life." This refers to advancing devotees (*sādhakās*) practicing the rules and regulations of spiritual life.

"What to speak (*kim uta:kiṁ punar vaktavyam*) of the perfected devotees, who by spiritual strength (*sva-dhāmnā:sva-prabhāvenaiva*) have dispelled the bad qualities of their minds, such as attachment and all the effects of time such as old age (*kāla-guṇāḥ*). O supreme one (*parama*)! By immersing themselves fully within the nectarean ocean of Your glories, these mature devotees achieve unimaginable perfection and transcend all material miseries."

In this regard the *Ṛg Veda* (1.154.1) says: *viṣṇor nu kaṁ vīryāṇi pravocaṁ yaḥ pārthivāni vimame rajāṁsi*, "Only he may fully enunciate the heroic deeds of Lord Viṣṇu who can count all the particles of dust in the world." Many *śruti-mantras* glorify devotional service to the Lord, such as *eko vaśī sarva-go ye 'nubhajanti dhīrās, teṣāṁ*

sukhaṁ śāśvataṁ netareṣām: “He is the one omnipresent Lord and controller; only those wise souls who worship Him obtain eternal happiness, not anyone else.” (*Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad*, Purva 2.1)

|| 10.87.17 ||

dṛtaya iva śvasanty asu-bhṛto yadi te ’nuvidhā

mahad-aham-ādayo ’ṇḍam asṛjan yad-anugrahataḥ

puruṣa-vidho ’nvayo ’tra caramo ’nna-mayādiṣu yaḥ

sad-asataḥ paraṁ tvam atha yad eṣv avaśeṣam ṛtam

TRANSLATION

Only if they become Your faithful followers are those who breathe actually alive, otherwise their breathing is like that of a bellows. It is by Your mercy alone that the elements, beginning with the mahat-tattva and false ego, created the egg of this universe. Among the manifestations known as anna-maya and so forth, You are the ultimate one, entering within the material coverings along with the living entity and assuming the same forms as those he takes. Distinct from the gross and subtle material manifestations, You are the reality underlying them all.

COMMENTARY

This verse answers the question: “What happens to people who fail to perform the worship mentioned in the previous verse?”

The *śrutis* said, “Those devoid of devotion to You resemble dead corpses, and though alive their breathing is no better than the breathing of a blacksmith’s bellows. But if they act favorably (*anuvidhā:anukula*) and become Your obedient devotees, then they can be called living (*asu-bhṛto:prāṇa-dhāriṇaḥ*).”

“But” one may object, “The bodies and minds of materialistic nondevotees seem to display the symptoms of life.”

The *śrutis* respond, “Through the mercy gained by worshiping the Lord, the *mahat-tattva* (consciousness), false ego, intelligence, mind and all the senses, which produce the gross and subtle bodies, create this universal body in totality and individuality. In other words, the demigods of the elements, such as consciousness and *ahaṅkāra*, worshiped the Lord and received His mercy, which empowered them to create. This is described in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (3.5.39):

devā ūcuḥ

nanāma te deva padāravindaṁ prapanna-tāpopaśamātapatram

yan-mūla-ketā yatayo 'ñjasoru-saṁsāra-duḥkhaṁ bahir utkṣipanti

"The demigods said, 'O Lord, Your lotus feet are like an umbrella for the surrendered souls, protecting them from all the miseries of material existence. All the sages under that shelter throw off all material miseries. We therefore offer our respectful obeisances unto Your lotus feet.'"

Śrutis: "The elements of consciousness and false ego are seen to be engaged in worshiping You, Lord Viṣṇu. Therefore the bodies of those whose consciousness, ears and senses are not worshiping You do not in truth possess consciousness, *ahaṅkāra* and senses. Thus they are like dead bodies."

Lord Viṣṇu: "Then what form of Mine should they worship?"

Śrutis: "He whose form resembles that of a man (*puruṣa*). Therefore You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead. You are also the Supersoul in all living beings and the great form of bliss called Brahman. But in relation to the *anna-maya* gross body, *prāṇa-maya* life air, *mano-maya* mind, *vijñāna-maya jīva* and *ānanda-maya* Paramātmā; (described in the *Brahmānanda-vallī* of the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* as *vasti-puccha*, *prthivī-puccha*, *atharvāgirā-puccha*, *mahah-puccha* and *brahma-puccha*, or the five *puruṣas*); You are the ultimate person (*puruṣa*), the *ānanda-maya brahma puccha*."

Lord Viṣṇu: "Why am I not all the other *puruṣas* such as the *anna-maya purusa* as well?"

Śrutis: "You are inherently connected with these other coverings like *anna-maya* in that You are the cause (*avaśeṣam ṛtam*), and *anna-maya* and the other *puruṣas* are effects. Thus as the cause of everything, You are in one sense identical with the manifest products of creation, but in Your original form (*svarūpa*) as the *ānanda-maya puruśa* (Supersoul) You remain distinct. Furthermore, among all these, You are the ultimate essence (*avaśeṣam*)."

"Thus Śrī Kṛṣṇa is distinct and transcendental to all the gross and subtle manifestations (*sad-asataḥ paraṁ*) of *anna-maya* and so on." Or another meaning of *sad-asataḥ paraṁ* "distinct from gross and subtle matter" is: "You are separate (*paraṁ:anyat*) and superior even to the *ānanda-maya purusa* (*sad*) as well as the lower *vijñāna, mana, prāṇa* and *anna-maya purusas* (*asataḥ*)."

The last word of all authoritative scripture (*sarvāntima-śruti*) is contained in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (2.7.1) *sutra*: *raso vai saḥ*, which proclaims Śrī Kṛṣṇa to be the infinitely expanding embodiment of divine pleasure (*sarva-bṛhattamānanda*). The

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (10.43.17) describes Kṛṣṇa as Cupid incarnate: *strīṇāṁ smaro mūrtimān*. The *Gopāla-tāpanī śruti* (Uttara 96) states, *yo 'sau jāgrat-svapna-suṣuptim atītya turyātīto gopālaḥ,* "The cowherd boy Gopāla transcends not only the material consciousness of wakefulness, dream and deep sleep, but also the fourth realm of pure, spiritual awareness." By saying *brahmano hi pratiṣṭhāham*, "I am basis of Brahman," the *Bhagavad-gītā* (14.27) clearly establishes that the personal form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the most exalted entity of all.

The *śrutis* continued, "We have definitively perceived this truth (*ṛtam*)." Or *ṛtam* "reality" can mean: "Having attained our forms as *śrutis* by austerity, we have realized this." The verb *ṛtam* means "to go," and "to go" can further refer to obtaining or knowing. Therefore, *ṛtam* means that which is perceived or obtained.

In this connection, the following statements of *śruti* describe the results of turning away from the Lord:

> *asuryā nāma te lokā andhena tamasāvṛtāḥ*
>
> *tāṁs te pretyābhigacchanti ye ke cātma-hano janāḥ*
>
> 'The killer of the soul, whoever he may be, must enter into the planets known as the worlds of the faithless, full of darkness and ignorance.' (*Śrī Īśopaniṣad* v.3)

According to the *Agni Purāṇa* and the *Viṣṇu Dharmottara Upa-Purāṇa*, the word *asuryā* means a person devoid of *viṣṇu-bhakti*. This definition is stated in the *Agni Purāṇa*:

> *dvau bhūta-sargau loke 'smin daiva āsura eva ca*
>
> *viṣṇu-bhakti-paro daiva āsuras tad-viparyayaḥ*
>
> "There are two kinds of created beings in this world, godly and demoniac. Those dedicated to the devotional service of Lord Viṣṇu are godly, and those opposed to such service are demoniac."

The positive value of *viṣṇu-bhakti*, devotion for Lord Viṣṇu, is expressed in the following *śruti* verses:

> *nityo nityānāṁ cetanaś cetanānām eko bahūnāṁ yo vidadhāti kāmān*
>
> *taṁ pīṭha-gaṁ ye 'nupaśyanti dhīrās teṣāṁ śāntiḥ śāśvatī netareṣām*

> “Among all the eternal, conscious beings, there is one who supplies the needs of everyone else. The wise souls who worship Him in His abode attain everlasting peace. Others cannot.” (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 2.2.13)

The following verses from the Taittirīya Upaniṣad establish the nature of the soul, Supersoul and Brahman:

> *sa vā eśa puruṣo anna-rasa-mayas tasyedam eva siraḥ, ayaṁ dakṣiṇaḥ*
>
> *pakṣaḥ ayam uttaraḥ pakṣaḥ, ayam ātmā idaṁ pucchaṁ pratiṣṭhā,*

> “After the purusa is ascertained to consist of the *anna-maya, prāṇa-maya, mano-maya* and *vijñāna-maya* coverings, then the fifth manifestation, *ānanda-maya*, is elucidated.” (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 2.2.3)

> *tasmād vā etasmād vijñāna-mayād anyo ’ntara*
>
> *ātmā ānanda-mayas tasya priyam eva siro*
>
> *modo dakṣiṇaḥ pakśaḥ pramoda uttaraḥ pakśa*
>
> *ānanda ātmā brahma-pucchaṁ pratiṣthā*

> “The Lord has assumed the form of a man. This is His head. That is His right side. That is His left side. That is His torso. This is His lower porton or feet, the shelter of all. (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 2.1.3)

More specifically, the indwelling Supersoul of the living entity is referred to in the words: *yo vijñāne tiṣṭhan vijṇānāntaro yasya vijñānaṁ sarīram*, “Who, standing within the conscious entity, pervades him, and who assumes the conscious entity as His own body.” (*Bṛhad-Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 3.7.22)

By the reference given in a different *śruti*, *ātmani tiśṭhan*, the term *vijñāna-maya* refers to the *jīvātma*. And *ānanda-maya* refers to the indwelling Supersoul of all beings, the Paramātmā, who is the supreme object of worship. This is the Vaiṣṇava conclusion.

The words *priya, moda, pramoda* and *ānanda* quoted above from the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (2.1.3) should not be explained in terms of the happiness generated from seeing a son. Rather, it is according to the progressive degrees of the manifestation of ecstasy in the Supersoul, the exclusive embodiment of all ecstasy, that the four terms *priyam, modaḥ, pramodaḥ* and *ānanda* are given as various names of Brahman, who is

the underlying basis of all ecstasy because He possesses the most extensive (*bṛhattama*) ecstasy of all. *Pratiṣṭhā* means “shelter” in the sense that “it is established within it” as in the statement *brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham.*”

After the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* makes the final Upaniṣadic statement “*rasaḥ vai saḥ*” establishing that rāsa is the highest, the *Gopāl-tapani Upaniṣad* declares that Kṛṣṇa, the highest form of bliss, is distinct even from the fourth level of consciousness (*atītya turyātīto gopālaḥ*), and states that His body, which is filled with *prema rasa*, is the topmost object of worship. The *ānanda-maya* Supersoul is simply one of Kṛṣṇa’s expansions as stated by Him, *viṣṭabhyāham idaṁ kṛtsnam ekāṁśena sthito jagat*; “With a single fragment of Myself I pervade and support this entire universe.” (Bg. 10.42)

Therefore the crest-jewels of the śrutis worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa, as shown in the *Bṛhad-Vāmana Purāṇa*, wherein it describes how the *śrutis* attained the service of Kṛṣṇa as gopīs. This will also be shown in verse twenty-three of this chapter recited by the *śrutis*: *striya urugendra bhoga bhuja daṇḍa*.

Thus the *śrutis* conclude that Kṛṣṇa is the most attractive among all the personal forms of Godhead. Understanding this, Nārada Muni will later offer obeisances to Kṛṣṇa in the words *namas tasmai bhagavate kṛṣṇāyāmala-kīrtaye*: “I offer My obeisances to Him of spotless fame, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa,” (Text 46) even though he is standing in front of Lord Śrī Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi.

|| 10.87.18 ||

udaram upāsate ya ṛṣi-vartmasu kūrpa-dṛśaḥ

parisara-paddhatiṁ hṛdayam āruṇayo daharam

tata udagād ananta tava dhāma śiraḥ paramaṁ

punar iha yat sametya na patanti kṛtānta-mukhe

TRANSLATION

Among the followers of the methods set forth by great sages, those with less refined vision worship the Supreme as present in the region of the abdomen, while the Āruṇis worship Him as present in the heart, in the subtle center from which all the prāṇic channels emanate. From there, O unlimited Lord, these worshipers raise their consciousness upward to the top of the head, where they can perceive You directly. Then, passing through the top of the head toward the supreme destination, they reach that place from which they will never again fall to this world, into the mouth of death.

COMMENTARY

Verses 16 and 17 spoke of *bhakti* with the object of worship being Bhagavān for the devotees. The present verse speaks about *yoga* with Paramātmā as the object of worship for the *yogīs*. The *Bhagavad-gītā* (Bg. 15.14) says:

ahaṁ vaiśvānaro bhūtvā prāṇinaṁ deham āsthitaḥ

prāṇāpāna-samāyuktaḥ pacāmy annaṁ catur-vidham

"I am the fire of digestion in the bodies of all living entities, and I join with the air of life, outgoing and incoming, to digest the four kinds of food." The word *udaram* (abdomen) in this verse refers to the Paramātmā in the form of Lord Vaiṣvānara situated in the stomach region, who bestows *kriyā-śakti*, the energy for activity.

Those of the *sampradāya* of sages who limit their meditation to this form of the Lord are less intelligent, *kūrpa-dṛśaḥ*, meaning literally "having eyes clouded by dust." This is because the abdomen is grosser than the heart. *Kūrpa* can also mean subtle or acute vision. Then the meaning would be: "Those sages worship the Lord in the abdomen with the vision of later approaching the more subtle heart region."

"The superior *yogīs* known as Āruṇis, on the other hand, worship the Supersoul in His form as the indwelling companion of the *jīva* in the heart, the Lord who bestows *jñāna-śakti*, the power of knowledge, and inspires one with all varieties of practical intelligence. This form of the Lord in the heart is very subtle and difficult to perceive (*daharam*). The heart is the place from which the *nāḍīs* (numerous channels of *prāṇa*) emanate and extend outward to all parts of the body."

"O Ananta! The soul rises up toward the head, the effulgent location where You, the Paramātmā, are perceived." In other words, beginning from the *mūlādhāra cakra* and passing through the heart, the soul rises up to the *brahma-randhra* (the topmost *cakra* at the roof of the brain). In actual fact, the *dhāma* or place of the Supersoul appears in all three of these locations. Having attained that topmost *dhāma* on the top of the head, they do not fall down again into the cycle of material existence (*kṛtānta-mukhe:saṁsāre*). This description is corroborated by several *śruti-mantras*: *udaraṁ brahmeti śārkarākṣā upāsate hṛdayaṁ brahmeti āruṇayo brahma haivaitā ita ūrdhvaṁ tv evodasarpat tac-chiro 'śrayate*, 'Those whose vision is clouded identify Brahman with the abdomen, while the Ārunis worship Brahman in the heart. One who is truly Brahman-realized travels upward from the heart to take shelter of the Lord who is manifested at the top of the head.'

The *Upaniṣads* refer repeatedly to the indwelling Paramātmā. *Śrī Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (3.12-13) describes Him as follows:

mahān prabhur vai puruṣaḥ sattvasyaiṣa pravartakaḥ

su-nirmalāṁ imāṁ prāptim īśāno jyotir avyayaḥ

aṅguṣṭha-mātraḥ puruṣo 'ntar-ātmā sadā janānāṁ hṛdaye sanniviṣṭaḥ

hṛdā manīṣā manasābhikḷpto ya etad vidur amṛtās te bhavanti

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead becomes the Purusa to initiate the expansion of this cosmos. He is the perfectly pure goal that yogīs strive to reach, the effulgent and infallible ultimate controller. Measuring the size of a thumb, the Puruṣa is always present as the Supersoul within the hearts of all living beings. By exercising proper intelligence, one can realize Him within the heart. Those who learn this method will gain immortality."

śataṁ caikā ca hṛdayasya nāḍyas tāsāṁ mūrdhānam abhiniḥsṛtaikā

tayordhvam āyann amṛtatvam eti viśvaṅṅ anyā utkramaṇe bhavanti

"There are one hundred and one subtle *prānic* channels emana-ting from the heart. One of these—the *suṣumṇā*—extends to the top of the head. By passing up through this channel, one transcends death. The other channels lead in all directions, to various kinds of rebirth." (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 8.6.6)

|| 10.87.19 ||

sva-kṛta-vicitra-yoniṣu viśann iva hetutayā

taratamataś cakāssy anala-vat sva-kṛtānukṛtiḥ

atha vitathāsv amūṣv avitathāṁ tava dhāma samaṁ

viraja-dhiyo 'nuyanty abhivipaṇyava eka-rasam

TRANSLATION

Apparently entering among the variegated species of living beings You have created, You inspire them to act, manifesting Yourself according to their higher and lower positions, just as fire manifests differently according to the shape of what it burns. Therefore those of spotless intelligence, who are altogether free from material attachments, realize Your undifferentiated, unchanging Self to be the permanent reality among all these impermanent life forms.

COMMENTARY

Someone may object, "If the Supersoul enters countless varieties of material bodies, then He would seem to become limited according to the body, and thus be similar to the *jīvas*. Therefore, how can He be worthy of worship?" This verse answers.

The *śrutis* said, "After creating the many species of material life, You expand into Your own creation as the Supersoul in order to provide the intelligence and inspiration every living being needs for his day-to-day existence."

"As stated in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (2.6.2). *tat sṛṣṭvā tad evānu-prāviśat*: 'After creating this world, He then entered within it.' The Lord enters the material world,

however, without forming any binding connection to it; therefore, the word *viśann iva* is used to express "only seeming to enter." *Taratamataś cakāssi* means that the Paramātmā enters the body of every living being, from the great demigod Brahmā down to the insignificant germ, and exhibits differing degrees of His potency according to each soul's capacity for enlightenment. *Analavat sva-kṛtānukṛtiḥ*: Just as fire ignited in several objects burns according to the different forms of those objects, so the Supreme Soul, entering the bodies of all living creatures, illuminates the consciousness of each conditioned soul according to his individual capacity. Thus among these impermanent species, Your personal form, with its particular qualities (*dhāma:svarūpam sa-viseśam*), remains permanently as the supreme reality."

"Therefore those of pure intelligence (*viraja dhiyaḥ*) know Your eternal (*avitathāṁ*), supreme and undifferentiated (*samaṁ*) *svarūpa*. Your personal form is the unchanging (*eka-rasam*) embodiment of pure ecstatic enjoyment (*kevala-ānandā svāda-svarūpa*) residing in all the temporary bodies (*vitathāsv amūṣv*)." In other words, Śrī Kṛṣṇa eternally maintains His personal form of immeasurable, unalloyed spiritual pleasure.

"Who are they who know? They are those who are completely free of material dealings, and devoid of *karmic* results in this life and the next. Because You are the source of everything; Your designations of being independent are not subject to any ranking of hierarchy. Since Your opulences never fail, You are worthy of worship." The following *śrutis* illustrate this verse:

tat sṛṣṭvā tad evānuprāviśat, "Having created the universe, He then entered it." (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 2.6.1)

> *eko devaḥ sarva-bhūteṣu gūḍhaḥ sarva-vyāpī sarva-bhūtāntarātmā*
>
> *karmādhyakṣaḥ sarva-bhūtādhivāsaḥ sākṣī cetā kevalo nirguṇaś ca*
>
> "The one Supreme Lord lives hidden inside all created things. He pervades all matter and sits within the hearts of all living beings. As the indwelling Supersoul, He supervises their material activities. Thus, while having no material qualities Himself, He is the unique witness and giver of consciousness." (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.11)

|| 10.87.20 ||

sva-kṛta-pureṣv amīṣv abahir-antara-saṁvaraṇaṁ

tava puruṣaṁ vadanty akhila-śakti-dhṛto 'ṁśa-kṛtam

iti nṛ-gatiṁ vivicya kavayo nigamāvapanaṁ

bhavata upāsate 'ṅghrim abhavam bhuvi viśvasitāḥ

TRANSLATION

The individual living entity, while inhabiting the material bodies he has created for himself by his karma, actually remains uncovered by either gross or subtle matter. This is so because, as the Vedas describe, he is part and parcel of You, the possessor of all potencies. Having determined this to be the status of the living entity, learned sages become imbued with faith and worship Your lotus feet, to which all Vedic sacrifices in this world are offered, and which are the source of liberation.

COMMENTARY

Having established the Supreme Soul (Paramātmā) as the proper object of all worship, this verse establishes the position of the subordinate jīva soul, a finite expansion of the Lord, as His worshiper. The enjoyer (*purusam*), the *jīva*, is in the singular form to express a class that exists in all bodies of men and other living beings created by their *karma*. The personified *Vedas* refer to the finite enjoyer of the material body (the *jīva* soul) as an expansion (*aṁśa*) of the transcendental reservoir of all potencies, the Supreme Lord. Actually the *jīva* is well known as the Lord's *tatastha-śakti*, marginal potency situated between spirit and matter, but he is not an independent Viṣṇu expansion.

This is stated in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (6.7.61): *viṣṇu-saktiḥ parā proktā, kṣetra-jñākhyā tathā parā*, 'The internal potency of Lord Viṣṇu is spiritual, as verified by the śāstras. There is another spiritual potency, known as *kṣetra-jña*, or the living entity.' And the *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.5) states: *prakṛtiṁ viddhi me parām jīva-bhūtām*, "Beyond this inferior energy, there is another superior energy known as the living entity, *jīva-bhūtām*." The *Śrī Nārada Pañcarātra* says:

yat taṭa-sthaṁ tu cid-rūpaṁ sva-saṁvedyād vinirgatam

rañjitaṁ guṇa-rāgeṇa sa jīva iti kathyate

"The marginal potency, who is spiritual by nature, who emanates from the self-cognizant *saṁvit* energy, and who becomes tainted by his attachment to the modes of material nature, is called the *jīva*." Although the *jīva* is thus the Lord's marginal potency (*taṭastha-śakti*), he is sometimes referred to as an aṁśa, as stated by Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (15.7): *mamaivāṁso jīva-loke jīva-bhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ*, "The living entities in this conditioned world are My eternal fragmental parts."

The *Mahāvarāha Purāna* explains how the soul is similar to an amsa:

svāṁśaś cātha vibhinnāṁśa iti dvidhā śa iṣyate

aṁśino yat tu sāmarthyaṁ yat-svarūpaṁ yathā sthitiḥ

tad eva nāṇu-mātro 'pi bhedaṁ svāṁśāṁśinoḥ kvacit

vibhinnāṁśo 'lpa-śaktiḥ syāt kiñcit sāmarthya-mātra-yuk

"The Supreme Lord is known in two ways: in terms of His plenary expansions and His separated expansions. Between the plenary expansions and Their source of expansion there is never any essential difference in terms of either Their capabilities, forms or situations. The separated expansions, on the other hand, possess only minute potency, being endowed only to a small extent with the Lord's powers."

What is the minute *jīva* soul like? The soul is never totally covered by either the external potency of *māyā* (*bahiḥ:bahiraṇga-māyā-saktyā*) or the internal spiritual potency (*antarena:antaraṇga-cic-chaktyā*). Or else, the soul is he who is covered both internally and externally by the subtle and gross coverings. Thus (*iti*), considering (*vivicya:vicārya*) the status (*nṛ-gatim*) of the *jīva* being bound up by *māyā* or his marginal position, the faithful (*viśvasitāḥ*) sages living on this earth worship the desire trees of Your feet (*aṅghrim:bhavac-caraṇa-kalpa-tarum*) growing in the field of the *Vedas* to destroy the bondage of material life (*abhavam*). Faithful (*viśvasitāḥ*) means those who have full belief in Kṛṣṇa's own words: *mām eva ye prapadyante māyām etāṁ taranti te*, "He who surrenders to Me crosses the ocean of *māyā*." (Bg 7.14) The following statements from the śrutis support this verse:

dvau suparṇau bhavato brahmano 'ṁśa-bhūtas tathetaro,

bhoktā bhavati anyo hi sākṣī bhavatīti

"On the tree of the body are two birds. One is an expansion of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He is the witness and the other is an enjoyer." (*Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* 2.23)

mathurā-maṇḍale yas tu jambūdvīpe sthito 'tha vā

yo 'rcayet pratimāṁ prati sa me priyataro bhuvi

"One who worships Me in My Deity form while living in the district of Mathurā or, indeed, anywhere in Jambūdvīpa, becomes most dear to Me in this world." (*Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* , Uttara 47)

|| 10.87.21 ||

duravagamātma-tattva-nigamāya tavātta- tanoś

carita-mahāmṛtābdhi-parivarta-pariśramaṇāḥ

na parilaṣanti kecid apavargam apīśvara te

caraṇa-saroja-haṁsa-kula-saṅga-visṛṣṭa-gṛhāḥ

TRANSLATION

My Lord, some fortunate souls have gotten relief from the fatigue of material life by diving into the vast nectar ocean of Your pastimes, which You enact when You manifest Your personal forms to propagate the unfathomable science of the self. These rare souls, indifferent even to liberation, renounce the happiness of home and family because of their association with devotees who are like flocks of swans enjoying at the lotus of Your feet.

COMMENTARY

In order to indicate the superexcellence of *bhakti-yoga*, which has as its object the Personality of Godhead (*bhagavān*), and that such devotional service is what the personified *Vedas* themselves accept as the best process, they again glorify *bhakti* in four verses (21-24).

Śrutis: "O Lord, to distribute (*nigamāya*) *ātma-tattva* (the confidential mystery of Your personal forms, qualities, pastimes and sweetness), which is difficult for the *jīvas* to understand (*duravagama*), You compassionately appear in this world to display Your pastimes which are vast oceans of nectar."

The word *pariśramaṇāḥ* (fatigue) refers to those rare (*kecit*) devotees who, although becoming fatigued after repeatedly diving (*parivartāḥ:taraṇga-bhrami-puñjāḥ*) into the endless waves and whirlpools in the ocean of Kṛṣṇa's ecstatic pleasure pastimes, do not desire even the happiness of liberation (*apavargam:mokṣa-sukham*), what to speak then, of the material happiness of *dharma, artha* and *kāma* (piety, wealth, sense enjoyment). Rather, their very fatigue becomes pleasure for them, just as young materialistic persons, though incapable of tolerating hard work, consider the fatigue produced by sex indulgence to be the highest pleasure of all.

Similarly, the Lord's pure devotees become enthused by relishing the sweet nectar of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes and feel impelled to dance, sing, kick their heels together, faint, shed tears, cry out in lamentation, and run about like madmen. Immersed in ecstasy, they are unaware of any bodily discomfort. Indeed, they think the happiness of Brahman to be like the pleasure animals derive from chewing grass.

This is also stated by Śrīdhara Swāmī:

tvat-kathāmṛta-pāthodhau viharanto mahā-mudaḥ

kurvanti kṛtinaḥ kecic catur-vargaṁ tṛṇopamam

> “Those rare, fortunate souls who blissfully play in the nectar ocean of Your pastimes consider the four great goals (*catur-vargaṁ*) of life [piety, wealth, sense pleasures and liberation] to be no more important than a blade of grass.”

The śrutis more specifically describe the cause of attaining happiness from the Lord: “By the association of saintly, swanlike (*haṁsa*) Vaiṣṇavas, who forever relish the sweet nectar of serving Your lotus feet, a devotee becomes so absorbed in tasting that nectar that He loses all attraction for his wife and family (*gṛhāḥ*).”

There are many verses from the *Upaniṣads* and other *śrutis* proclaiming the superiority of *bhakti* over *mukti*. The *Nṛsiṁha-pūrva-tāpanī Upaniṣad* says, *yaṁ sarve vedā namanti mumukṣavo brahma-vādinaś ca*: “To Him all the *Vedas*, all seekers of liberation and all students of the Absolute Truth offer their obeisances.” Commenting on this *mantra*, Śrī Śaṅkarācārya admits, *muktā api līlayā vigrahaṁ kṛtvā bhagavantaṁ bhajanti*: “Even the liberated souls have form. They worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead and enjoy pastimes with Him.”

Śrīla Madhvācārya Ānandatīrtha, cites his own favorite śruti-mantras in this regard, such as *muktā hy etam upāsate, muktānām api bhaktir hi paramānanda-rūpiṇī*. “Even those who are liberated worship Him, and even for them devotional service is the embodiment of supreme bliss.” The Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa (3.12.3) says, *amṛtasya dhārā bahudhā dohamānaṁ/ caraṇaṁ no loke su-dhitāṁ dadhātu/ oṁ tat sat*: “May the abundant streams of nectar flowing from His feet (*caraṇāmṛta*) flood the world with nectar.”

|| 10.87.22 ||

tvad-anupathaṁ kulāyam idam ātma-suhṛt-priya-vac

carati tathonmukhe tvayi hite priya ātmani ca

na bata ramanty aho asad-upāsanayātma-hano

yad-anuśayā bhramanty uru-bhaye ku-śarīra-bhṛtaḥ

TRANSLATION

When this human body is used for Your devotional service, it acts as one’s self, friend and beloved. But unfortunately, although You always show mercy to the conditioned souls and affectionately help them in every way, and although You are their true Self, people in general fail to delight in You. Instead they commit spiritual suicide by worshiping illusion. Alas, because they persistently hope for success in their devotion to the unreal, they continue to wander about this greatly fearful world, assuming various degraded bodies.

COMMENTARY

After describing the devotees who renounce the enjoyments of hearth and home, the *śrutis* lament for the *jīvas* who are attached to home and do not perform devotional service. This body (*kulāyam*), which is the nest of the *jīvātmā* bird, is the ideal facility (*anupatham*) for reviving one's spiritual consciousness. The bodies' organs—ears, tongue, eyes and hands—are quite suitable for hearing and chanting about Kṛṣṇa, worshiping Him, and practicing the limbs of devotional service.

One's material body is destined to remain intact for only a short time, and so it is called *kulāyam*, subject to "dissolving into the earth" (*kau līyate*). This body appears as one's self, friend and beloved. But such appearance is not found in a dead body.

"Ah! How sad it is that they do not find pleasure in humbly serving You, by whose connection the body seems to be one's self. Nevertheless, due to Your compassionate nature You are favorably disposed toward them and always act as their benefactor. You ever remain their beloved, well-wishing friend."

"In reality, as the ever-present, indwelling Supersoul (*ātmani*), You are a greater object of affection than even the body and the soul itself, and are thus very easily served. By worshiping illusion (*asad-upāsanā*) due to the bad training received from studying and teaching false materialistic scriptures or by having too much affection for sons, wife and family they maintain material desires (*anusayaḥ:vāsanā*) that carry them into more degraded bodies (*ku-śarīra*) like jackals and animals in each successive life. Such people commit spiritual suicide, and continually rotate in the terribly fearful cycle of material existence (*uru-bhaye*)."

The *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (4.3.15) states:

> *ārāmam asya paśyanti na taṁ paśyati kaścana. na tam*
>
> *vidātha ya imā jajānānyad yuṣmākam antaram babhūva.*
>
> *nīhāreṇa prāvṛtā jalpyā cāsu-tṛpa uktha-śāsaś caranti*
>
> "Everyone can see the place where the Lord manifested Himself in this world for His own pleasure, but still no one sees Him. None of you know Him who generated all these living beings, and thus there is a great difference between your vision and His. Covered by the fog of illusion, you performers of Vedic rituals indulge in useless talk and live only to gratify your senses."

The *Īśopaniṣad* (3) declares:

> *asuryā nāma te lokā andhena tamasāvṛtāḥ*

tāṁs te pretyābhigacchanti ye ke cātma-hano janāḥ

"The killer of the soul, whoever he may be, must enter into the planets known as the worlds of the faithless, full of darkness and ignorance."

|| 10.87.23 ||

nibhṛta-marun-mano-'kṣa-dṛḍha-yoga-yujo hṛdi yan

munaya upāsate tad arayo 'pi yayuḥ smaraṇāt

striya uragendra-bhoga-bhuja-daṇḍa-viṣakta-dhiyo

vayam api te samāḥ sama-dṛśo 'ṅghri-saroja-sudhāḥ

TRANSLATION

Simply by constantly thinking of Him, the enemies of the Lord attained the same Supreme Truth whom sages fixed in yoga worship by controlling their breath, mind and senses. Similarly, we śrutis, who generally see You as all-pervading, will achieve the same nectar from Your lotus feet that Your consorts are able to relish because of their loving attraction to Your mighty, serpentine arms, for You look upon us and Your consorts in the same way.

COMMENTARY

In order to speak of the supreme position of *bhakti-yoga* directed only to Kṛṣṇa, and of the superexcellence of Kṛṣṇa among all the personal forms of God, the *śrutis* first denigrate *jñāna-yoga* which has impersonal Brahman as its goal.

The *śrutis* said, "The sages who engage in steadfast *yoga* with fully controlled (*nibhṛtaiḥ:saṁyamitaiḥ*) breathing, mind and senses, meditate in their purified hearts on that same Paramātmā, the personal form of Brahman, which the demons, who appeared when Kṛṣṇa descended, attained simply by remembrance of the Lord with animosity. Ah, such is the greatness of Kṛṣṇa that even demons like Kaṁsa and others, though they saw Kṛṣṇa briefly with mundane vision and impure hearts obsessed with enmity, and though they were devoid of any realization of the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa's body, still they quickly obtained the perfection of liberation simply by remembering Śrī Kṛṣṇa's personal form. We cannot even imagine how long it will take those meditative sages to attain that Brahman."

Speaking for themselves, however, the personified *Vedas* here state that they wish to taste the sweet mellows of *kṛṣṇa-prema* that are relished by Kṛṣṇa's intimate friends such as the young gopīs of Vraja. The *śrutis* said, "The minds of the damsels of Vraja (*striyaḥ*) were attracted with great love to the powerfully soft arms of Kṛṣṇa, which

resemble the body of the king of snakes. They lovingly served and relished the sweet nectar of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet (*aṅghri-saroja-sudhāḥ*) by holding them on their breasts (*hṛdi:vakṣaḥ-sthale*)."

This is described in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.31.19):

yat te sujāta-caraṇāmburuhaṁ staneṣu

bhītāḥ śanaiḥ priya dadhīmahi karkaśeṣu

tenāṭavīm aṭasi tad vyathate na kiṁ svit

kūrpādibhir bhramati dhīr bhavad-āyuṣāṁ naḥ

"O dearly beloved! Your lotus feet are so soft that we place them gently on our breasts, fearing that Your feet will be hurt. Our life rests only in You. Our minds, therefore, are filled with anxiety that Your tender feet might be wounded by pebbles as You roam about on the forest path."

In the second half of this verse the *śrutis*, hankering in ecstatic eagerness, imagine that they have attained Kṛṣṇa's feet in the same way (*vayam api*) as the *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana. The *śrutis* said, "We will attain You by performing austerities to obtain forms just like (*samāḥ*) the Vraja-gopīs."

"But" Kṛṣṇa might question, "How will you do this?"

Śrutis: "With undivided attention (*sama-dṛśaḥ*) we will faithfully follow in the footsteps of the damsels of Vraja."

In this verse four groups have been described. The sages and the demons mentioned in the first half attained impersonal realization of Kṛṣṇa. In the last part of the verse, the *gopīs* and *śrutis* both achieved Kṛṣṇa in the mood of conjugal love. This is understood from using the word *api* (also) twice.

In the supplement to the *Bṛhad-vāmana Purāṇa*, Lord Brahmā relates a history regarding this incident:

brahmānanda-mayo loko vyāpī vaikuṇṭha-saṁjñitaḥ

tal-loka-vāsī tatra-sthaiḥ stuto vedaiḥ parāt-paraḥ

“The infinite world of spiritual bliss is called Vaikuṇṭha. There the Supreme Truth lives, being glorified by the personified *Vedas* who reside there too.”

ciraṁ stutvā tatas tuṣṭaḥ parokṣaṁ prāha tān girā

tuṣṭo ’smi brūta bho prājñā varaṁ yaṁ manasepsitam

“Once, after the *Vedas* had elaborately praised Him, the Lord felt especially satisfied and spoke to them in a voice whose source remained invisible: ‘My dear sages, I am very satisfied with you. Please ask of Me some benediction that you secretly desire.”

śrutaya ūcuḥ

yathā tal-loka-vāsinyaḥ kāma-tattvena gopīkāḥ

bhajanti ramaṇaṁ matvā cikīrṣājani nas tathā

“The *śrutis* replied, ‘We have developed the desire to become like the Vraja-gopīs of the mortal world who, inspired by lust, worship You in the mood of a lover.’”

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

durlabho durghaṭaś caiva yuṣmākaṁ sa manorathaḥ

mayānumoditaḥ samyak satyo bhavitum arhati

“The Lord then said, ‘This desire of yours is difficult to fulfill. Indeed, it is almost impossible. But since I am sanctioning it, your wish must inevitably come true.’”

āgāmini viriñcau tu jāte sṛṣṭy-artham udite

kalpaṁ sāraśvataṁ prāpya vraje gopyo bhaviṣyatha

“When the next Brahmā takes birth to faithfully execute his duties of creation, and when the day of his life called the Sārasvata-kalpa arrives, you will all appear in Vraja as gopīs.”

pṛthivyāṁ bhārate kṣetre māthure mama maṇḍale

vṛndāvane bhaviṣyāmi preyān vo rāsa-maṇḍale

“On the earth, in the land of Bhārata, in My own district of Mathurā, in the forest of Vṛndāvana, I will become your beloved in the circle of the *rāsa* dance.’’

jāra-dharmeṇa su-snehaṁ su-dṛḍhaṁ sarvato ’dhikam

mayi samprāpya sarve ’pi kṛta-kṛtyā bhaviṣyatha

“Thus obtaining Me as your paramour, you will all gain the most exalted and steadfast pure love for Me, and in this way you will fulfill all your ambitions.”

brahmovāca

śrutvaitac cintayantyas tā rūpaṁ bhagavataś ciram

ukta-kālaṁ samāsādya gopyo bhūtvā hariṁ gatāḥ

Lord Brahmā said: “After hearing these words, the *śrutis* meditated on the Lord’s beautiful form for a long time. When the designated time ultimately arrived, they became gopīs and obtained the association of Lord Hari.’’

The following verse from the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (4.5.6) supports the topic of this verse: *ātmā vā are draṣṭavyaḥ śrotavyo mantavyo nididhyāsitavyaḥ*, “One must see the Lord, hear about Him, think about Him, and meditate upon with Him fixed concentration.”

The idea here is that one should directly see (*draṣṭavyaḥ:sāksāt kartavyaḥ*) the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The means for achieving this are then stated: First one must hear from a bonafide *guru* and take the words of such a spiritual master into one’s heart by offering him humble service and striving in all ways to please him. One should then continuously ponder the divine message of the spiritual master with the aim of dispelling all one’s doubts and misconceptions. Then one can proceed to meditate on the Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet with total conviction and determination.

The *jñānīs* conclude that impersonal realization (*nirviśeṣa*) of the Supreme is more complete and final than personal worship (*sa-viśeṣa*) of the Supreme Godhead. The Vaiṣṇavas, however, conclude that the essential meaning of the Vedas refers to the personal form of Godhead, who possesses wonderful spiritual variety and distinct transcendental qualities. The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (1.2.23) explains this point:*yam evaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyas/ tasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇute tanūṁ svām*, “One cannot understand the supreme soul by studying the *Vedas* or by hearing many scriptures or by one’s mental energy. The Lord reveals His personal form to the person who accepts the Lord as his master. That person alone attains the Lord.”

A further understanding of the verse quoted above from the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (4.5.6): *ātmā vā are draṣṭavyaḥ śrotavyo mantavyo nididhyāsitavyaḥ*, is given as follows: One should realize and see (*draṣṭavyaḥ*) the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who possesses a body (*tanūm*) full of auspicious qualities. This can be achieved by hearing (*śrotavyo*) the *kṛṣṇa-mantra* from the mouth of the divine spiritual master. *Śrutis* such as the *Krama-dīpikā* state that the *mantra* and the *svarūpa* of the Lord are identical: *mantra-maya-vapuśaḥ*. The word *mantavyaḥ* refers to the process of remembering, which consists of paying careful attention to the sound and the meaning of the *mantra*. The word *nididhyāsitavyaḥ* can be understood according to the statement of the *Amara-kosa* dictionary: *nirvarṇaṁ tu nirdhyānaṁ darśana ālokanekṣaṇam*, the word *nirdhyānaṁ* means "seeing" (*darsanam*). The desire to see the Deity mentioned in the *mantra* is called *nididhyāsanam*.

In other words, by regularly chanting one's *dikṣa-mantra* as *japa* while carefully thinking about its meaning, one should cultivate the desire to see one's worshipable Lord. By cultivating the desire to see Him, then Śrī Kṛṣṇa, reality the beautiful, will manifest Himself one day before the eyes of the devotee. In regard to the personified *Vedas*' desire to attain the Vraja-gopīs' mood of conjugal desire, Kṛṣṇa says in the *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* (Uttara 4):

apūtaḥ pūto bhavati yaṁ māṁ smṛtvā,

avratī vratī bhavati yaṁ māṁ smṛtvā,

niṣkāmaḥ sa-kāmo bhavati yaṁ māṁ smṛtvā,

aśrotrī śrotrī bhavati yaṁ māṁ smṛtvā

> "By remembering Me, one who is impure becomes pure. By remembering Me, one who follows no vows becomes a strict follower of vows. By remembering Me, one who is desireless develops desires to serve Me. By remembering Me, one who has studied no Vedic mantras becomes an expert knower of the *Vedas*."

The *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* (12) also states: *vraja-strī-jana-sambhūtaḥ śrutibhyo brahma-saṅgataḥ*, "The *śrutis* took birth among the women of Vraja." Or it means that Śrī Kṛṣṇa achieved the association of all the divisions (*brahma-saṅgataḥ:prāpta-vedāṇga-saṇgo 'bhūt*) of the *Vedas* by meeting the *śrutis* when they appeared in Vṛndāvana as *gopīs*.

|| 10.87.24 ||

ka iha nu veda batāvara-janma-layo 'gra-saraṁ

yata udagād ṛṣir yam anu deva-gaṇā ubhaye

tarhi na san na cāsad ubhayaṁ na ca kāla-javaḥ

kim api na tatra śāstram avakṛṣya śayīta yadā

TRANSLATION

Everyone in this world has recently been born and will soon die. So how can anyone here know Him who existed prior to everything else and who gave rise to the first learned sage, Brahmā, and all subsequent demigods, both lesser and greater? When He lies down and withdraws everything within Himself, nothing else remains—no gross or subtle matter or bodies composed of these, no force of time or revealed scripture.

COMMENTARY

Here the *śrutis* express that devotional service, *bhakti-yoga*, as described in these prayers of the personified *Vedas*, is the surest and easiest path to knowledge of the Lord and to liberation. On the other hand, the path of *jñāna-yoga*, the philosophic search for knowledge, is very difficult to traverse.

The *śrutis* said, "O Lord! The men in this world are relatively recent productions, so how can they completely know You, who existed before all? Besides, from You first appeared the *Veda*, which is the source of what ever little knowledge can be had of You. According to the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, even the *Vedas* are searching after You, *veda-guhyāni hṛt-pateḥ*, "The Lord of the heart (Paramātmā) hides Himself deep within the confidential recesses of the Vedic sound." (SB 1.3.35) Following the *Veda*, the presiding demigods of the senses like the demigods of the directions, wind and sun, and the planetary rulers like Lord Brahmā appeared from You. Certainly those who have appeared even more recently than them cannot easily know You.

"At the time of dissolution when You withdraw everything and lie down, then there is no means for the *jīvas*, who also lie down within You, to acquire knowledge, since at that time neither the gross elements like ether or the subtle elements like the *mahat-tattva* are manifest. Nor is there the material body or the movements and effects of time. Therefore, at that time there is nothing; no senses, life airs, and no revealed scriptures to give knowledge."

The intended idea is as follows: "As long as the creation lasts, living beings face many obstacles created by the coverings of material bodies. Even though they have divine scriptures to guide them and the opportunity to execute various methods of *sādhana*, the conditioned souls have but little power for gaining knowledge of You. When the time of annihilation comes, even though there are no more obstructions, the Vedic scriptures and their regulative injunctions become unmanifest, leaving the dormant *jīvas* completely in ignorance of You. Therefore we should abandon our quest for knowledge of You and simply engage in Your devotional service."

The *śrutis* speak on the same subject:

ko 'ddhā veda ka iha pravocat kuta āyātāḥ kuta iyaṁ visṛṣṭiḥ

arvāg devā visarjanenā-thā ko veda yata ā babhūva

"Who in this world actually knows, and who can explain whence this creation has come? The demigods, after all, are younger than the creation. Who, then, can tell whence this world has come into being?" (Rg Veda 3.54.5)

|| 10.87.25 ||

janim asataḥ sato mṛtim utātmani ye ca bhidāṁ

vipaṇam ṛtaṁ smaranty upadiśanti ta ārupitaiḥ

tri-guṇa-mayaḥ pumān iti bhidā yad abodha-kṛtā

tvayi na tataḥ paratra sa bhaved avabodha-rase

TRANSLATION

Supposed authorities who declare that matter is the origin of existence, that the permanent qualities of the soul can be destroyed, that the self is compounded of separate aspects of spirit and matter, or that material transactions constitute reality—all such authorities base their teachings on mistaken ideas that hide the truth. The dualistic conception that the living entity is produced from the three modes of nature is simply a product of ignorance. Such a conception has no real basis in You, for You are transcendental to all illusion and always enjoy perfect, total awareness.

COMMENTARY

The followers of Vaiśeṣika, Nyāya, Sāṅkhya, Yoga and Mīmāṁsā philosophies all have their own incorrect ideas, which the personified *Vedas* point out in this prayer.

The *śrutis* said, "Not only is the truth about You, the Personality of Godhead, difficult to understand, but because there is no unity of opinion among the learned, true knowledge about the supreme goal of life is also virtually impossible to acquire for the jīva souls."

"Patañjali Ṛṣi's *yoga* philosophy teaches one how to achieve Brahman liberation by a mechanical process (*janim asataḥ*) of exercise and meditation. The logicians (Naiyāyikas) following Gautama Ṛṣi speak of liberation as the destruction of the soul's innate consciousness (*sato mṛtim*), with its twenty-one different causes of suffering: the six senses, the six sense objects, the six whirlpools (heat, cold, hunger, thirst, greed and illusion), happiness, distress and the body. Sāṅkhya philosophers say that the soul's status of being free from qualities is his liberation. In truth, the soul is both

conscious and active, but the Sāṅkhyites wrongly separate these two functions of the living force (*ātmani ye ca bhidām*), ascribing consciousness to the soul (*puruṣa*) and activity to material nature (*prakṛti*). The Mīmāṁsakas (proponents of Karma-mīmāṁsā) of Jaimini Ṛṣi say (*smaranti:vadanti*) that material work (*karma*) and it results are the only reality (*ṛtam*). The cycle of *karma* is perpetual, and the best one can aim for is higher birth among the demigods."

All these philosophies teach by attribution, not by seeing the truth. If the living entity were in fact composed of the three modes of nature, then all these erroneous philosophies would be valid, but this is not the fact. Rather, the living entity is in truth devoid of material qualities. With this implication in mind the *śrutis* conclude this verse by saying, "The dualistic idea that the living entity is composed of the three material modes is a creation of Your ignorance potency (*avidya-śakti:abodha-kṛtā*) and thus is not a fact. Furthermore, that duality affects only the *jīvātmā* and not You, the Paramātmā."

"The covering of ignorance of the *jīva* does not take place in You (*tvayi na tataḥ*) because You are completely transcendental (*paratra*). Ignorance is a function of *māyā* and *māyā* is under Your control. You are exclusively imbued with total consciousness (*avabodha-rase:sampūrṇa-cid-eka-rase*). Darkness cannot cover the unlimited light of the sun, but it can cover objects like gold or silver which have small portions of light. Similarly, ignorance cannot cover the Supersoul but it can cover the individual spirit soul. Thus the fallacious conclusions of these speculative philosophers prove that even great scholars and sages are often bewildered by ignorance."

As the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (1.2.5) says,

> *avidyāyām antare vartamānāḥ*
>
> *svayaṁ dhīrāḥ paṇḍitam-manyamānāḥ*
>
> *jaṅghanyamānāḥ pariyanti mūḍhā*
>
> *andhenaiva nīyamānā yathāndhāḥ*

> "Caught in the grip of ignorance, self-proclaimed experts consi-der themselves learned authorities. Befooled, they wander about this world engaging in arguments and counterarguments, like the blind leading the blind."

|| 10.87.26 ||

sad iva manas tri-vṛt tvayi vibhāty asad ā-manujāt

sad abhimṛśanty aśeṣam idam ātmatayātma-vidaḥ

na hi vikṛtiṁ tyajanti kanakasya tad-ātmatayā

TRANSLATION

The three modes of material nature comprise everything in this world—from the simplest phenomena to the complex human body. Although these phenomena appear real, they are only a false reflection of the spiritual reality, being a superimposition of the mind upon You. Still, those who know the Supreme Self consider the entire material creation to be real inasmuch as it is nondifferent from the Self. Just as things made of gold are indeed not to be rejected, since their substance is actual gold, so this world is undoubtedly nondifferent from the Lord who created it and then entered within it.

COMMENTARY

A Māyāvādi philosopher would take the words spoken by the personified *Vedas* in the preceding prayer— *tri-guṇa-mayaḥ pumān iti bhidā*—as negating any distinction between the Paramātmā and the *jīva* soul. He would claim that since the *jīva's* material embodiment is a temporary display of the three modes of nature, when the *jīva's* ignorance is destroyed by knowledge, he becomes the Paramātmā, the Supreme Soul. Bondage, liberation and the manifest world are all unreal creations of ignorance. In response to such ideas, the *śrutis* speak this verse to clarify the factual relationship between *sat* and *asat*.

The whole universe comprised of the three modes and including the living entity seems to be real, but actually it is not because it is simply an imagined production of the mind. The *śrutis* say, *asato 'dhimano 'sṛjyata, manaḥ prajāpatim asṛjat, prajāpatiḥ prajā asṛjat, tad vā idaṁ manasy eva paramaṁ pratiṣṭhitaṁ yad idaṁ kiṁ ca*: "The supreme mind was originally created from *asat*. This mind created Prajāpati, and Prajāpati created all living beings. Thus mind alone is the ultimate foundation of everything that exists in this world."

"This statement is in accordance with the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (2.7.1), *asad vā idam agra āsīt*: 'In the beginning of this creation, only *asat* was present.' By the agency of Brahman (*asato*), as the active cause, there evolved ignorance, which manifested in the form of the mind (*manaḥ*). That total mind of the creation then manifested Prajāpati Brahmā, who identifies with it as his body, since the economy of creation is such that no material body is created until some living entity wants to inhabit it. Therefore this world is created by the mind."

"But the learned knowers of the self say the world is real. How can you say it is unreal?"

“They understand it to be real in the sense that it is the product of the real; in other words, it is nondifferent from it. Indeed, when a particular created object has a particular ingredient cause, it appears in the very form of that cause, and in that way can be utilized in a practical way.”

They illustrate this with a common example in the third line: “When gold transforms into an earring, it is not rejected by those wanting gold, because the earring is in essence gold.” True *jñānīs* see in this mundane example an analogy to the different-yet-nondifferent relationship of the Supreme Lord and His emanations, both material and spiritual. Thus this transcendental knowledge frees them from the bondage of illusion, for they can then see Śrī Kṛṣṇa throughout His creation.

|| 10.87.27 ||

tava pari ye caranty akhila-sattva-niketatayā

ta uta padākramanty avigaṇayya śiro nirṛteḥ

parivayase paśūn iva girā vibudhān api tāṁs

tvayi kṛta-sauhṛdāḥ khalu punanti na ye vimukhāḥ

TRANSLATION

The devotees who worship You as the shelter of all beings disregard Death and place their feet on his head. But with the words of the Vedas You bind the nondevotees like animals, though they be vastly learned scholars. It is Your affectionate devotees who can purify themselves and others, not those who are inimical to You.

COMMENTARY

In the previous two verses regarding the supreme goal of life, the personified *Vedas* presented five different schools of erroneous philosophies: the *asad-utpatti-vāda* , proponents of Patañjali’s *yoga* system, who say one can attain Brahman by material exercises; the *sad-vināśa-vāda* of the Naiyāyikas, who advocate destruction of the *jīva’s* consciousness; the *saguṇatva-bheda-vāda* of the Sāṅkhyas, who say liberation is achieved when the soul is separated from all his apparent qualities; the *vipaṇa-vāda* of the Mīmāṁsakas, who condemn the soul to eternal involvement in the mundane business of *karma*; and the *vivarta-vāda* of the Māyāvādīs, who claim the soul’s real life in this world is an illusion.

Having rejected all these concepts, the personified *Vedas* now present *paricaryā-vāda,* the philosophy of devotional service in this verse. The Vaiṣṇava philosophy teaches that the *jīva* soul is an atomic particle of spiritual personality who possesses minute knowledge. He is not independent and has no material qualities. Being minute, he is prone to come under the control of the material energy, where he suffers the pains of

material life. Only by *bhakti*, and not by fruitive work, mental speculation or any other process, can one destroy the suffering of material existence and attain the Supreme Personality of Godhead. As Śrī Kṛṣṇa says in His own words,

> *daivī hy eṣā guna-mayī, mama māyā duratyayā*
>
> *mām eva ye prapadyante, māyām etāṁ taranti te*
>
> "My divine energy consisting of the three modes of material nature is difficult to overcome. But those who have surrendered unto Me can easily cross beyond it." (Bg. 7.14)

> *bhaktyāham ekayā grāhyaḥ śraddhayātmā priyaḥ satām*
>
> *bhaktiḥ punāti man-niṣṭhā śva-pākān api sambhavāt*
>
> "Only by practicing unalloyed devotional service with full faith in Me can one obtain Me, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. I am naturally dear to My devotees, who take Me as the only goal of their loving service. By engaging in such pure devotional service, even the dog-eaters can purify themselves from the contamination of their low birth." (SB 11.14.21)

According to these statements of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, *bhakti* is the only process. By such statements as the twenty-first verse beginning *duravagamātma* (difficult to understand), the *śrutis* also indicate that devotional service is itself the supreme goal of life (*parama-puruṣarthā*). Thus propounding the Vaiṣṇava philosophy as superior to all others, the *śrutis* place the Vaiṣṇavas in the topmost category and condemn all other philosophers in this verse. The genitive form of *tava* is used here in the sense of the accusative case. The intervention of other words between the *upasarga* and the verb in the phrase *tava pariye caranti*, which is equivalent to *tvāṁ ye paricaranti*, is not a mistake, rather it is permissible for metrical reasons in the verse according to the rule of the great grammarian Pāṇini: *chandasi vyavahitās ca*. The *śrutis* said, "The Vaiṣṇavas worship You as the shelter (*niketa:āsrayaḥ*) of everything that exists (*akhila-sattva*). Moreover, the devotees themselves can be called *akhila-sattva-niketa* in the sense that they serve You with the mood of accepting the reality (*sattvam*) of both the material and spiritual worlds. In his commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra*, Śrīpāda Madhvācārya gives evidence of this fact by quoting the *śruti-mantra*: *satyaṁ hy evedaṁ viśvam asṛjata*, "He created this world as real." The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.1.11) refers to the Supreme Lord as *pradhāna-pumbhyām naradeva satya-kṛt*, "the creator of a real universe of matter and living entities."

There is another more confidential meaning of *akhila-sattva-niketa*: *Akhila* may be analyzed as follows: The word *khila* means impure or inferior, therefore *akhila* means pure or perfect, though its common meaning is "all." Then the phrase means that Supreme Lord's personal abodes in Vaikuṇṭha are perfectly pure realms free of anxiety and restriction. Therefore, the Vaiṣṇavas who serve the Supreme Lord simply step on the head of death and transcend material existence without paying much attention.

“But,” it may be questioned, “The proponents of the above-mentioned philosophies can also surpass death.”

The *śrutis* answer, “No, they cannot! Those so-called wise philosophers (*vibudhān*) who are inimical (*vimukha*) to the Lord are bound in illusion like animals tied by the ropes of such Vedic statements as *asato ’dhimano ’sṛjyata, manaḥ prajāpatim asṛjat*. Thus they are kept in ignorance by the same words of the *Vedas* that enlighten the surrendered devotees.”

One should not think, however, that Vaiṣṇavas are ignorant because they may not be expert in philosophical analysis and argument. The Vaiṣṇavas acquire perfect knowledge by receiving the Lord’s favor, not through their own efforts at mental speculation. This is confirmed in *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (6.23):

> *yasya deve parā bhaktir yathā deve tathā gurau*
>
> *tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ prakāśante mahātmanaḥ*
>
> “Unto those great souls who have implicit faith in both the Lord and the spiritual master, all the imports of Vedic knowledge are automatically revealed.”

The *śrutis* continue, “Therefore, those who have manifested love (*sauhṛdāḥ:prema*) for You are themselves purified and by their instructions they purify others. However, those who are not devotees (*vimukhāḥ:abhaktah*) do not become pure.” The following *sastric* statements confirm these points: *nityo nityānām cetanaś cetanānām, eko bahūnāṁ yo vidadhāti kāmān*, “There is one eternal, supreme conscious being among all the other eternal, conscious beings who supplies the needs of everyone else.” (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 2.2.13)

> *taṁ pīṭha-gam ye tu yajanti dhīrās, teṣāṁ sāntiḥ sāsvatī netareṣām*
>
> “Those wise souls who worship Him in His abode attain everlasting peace; others cannot.” (*Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* 22)

> *juṣṭaṁ yadā paśyaty anyam īśam asya mahimānam iti vīta-śokaḥ*
>
> *ṛco ’kṣare pare vyoman yasmin devā adhi viśve niṣeduḥ*

"When the Lord is served with loving affection (*juṣṭaṁ:prītyā*), one realizes (*pasyati:anubhavati*) His glory. By such means one becomes free of sorrow, victorious over death, and ascends to the eternally manifest (*akṣare:nitya-rūpe*) spiritual sky called Mahā-vaikuṇṭha (*pare vyoman*)." (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 4.7-8)

|| 10.87.28 ||

tvam akaraṇaḥ sva-rāḍ akhila-kāraka-śakti-dharas

tava balim udvahanti samadanty ajayānimiṣāḥ

varṣa-bhujo 'khila-kṣiti-pater iva viśva-sṛjo

vidadhati yatra ye tv adhikṛtā bhavataś cakitāḥ

TRANSLATION

Though You have no material senses, You are the self-effulgent sustainer of everyone's sensory powers. The demigods and material nature herself offer You tribute, while also enjoying the tribute offered them by their worshipers, just as subordinate rulers of various districts in a kingdom offer tribute to their lord, the ultimate proprietor of the land, while also enjoying the tribute paid them by their own subjects. In this way the universal creators faithfully execute their assigned services out of fear of You.

COMMENTARY

The personified *Vedas* conclude, "All intelligent living beings should acknowledge their dependence on You, the supreme independent controller, and willingly engage in Your service."

But Lord Nārāyaṇa might object, "No, this is not so. Because I possess eyes, ears, hands and so forth, I am just as dependent on the senses as the living beings. What question is there of My independence or almighty power?"

Śrutis: "No, You have no material senses, yet You are the absolute controller of all."

Lord Nārāyaṇa: "Then where do My eyes, ears and mind come from?"

Śrutis: "Your hands, feet, eyes and ears are not like those of an ordinary, conditioned soul, which are derived from false ego, a material substance. Rather, Your transcendentally beautiful features are direct manifestations of Your internal nature (*sva-rāḍ*)."

The phrase *akhila-śakti-dhara*, "maintainer of everyone's sensory powers," has an alternative explanation: The power that Lord Nārāyaṇa maintains within Himself is

akhila, free from the limitations of all that is *khila*, inferior and insignificant. The Supreme Lord energizes the living being's senses, as described by the Kena Upaniṣad (1.2): *cakṣuṣas cakṣur uta śrotrasya śrotraṁ, manaso mano yad vāco ha vācam*. "He is the eye's eye, the ear's ear, the mind's mind, and the voice's capacity of speech."

Śrutis: "You bestow the power (*śakti*) of hearing, seeing and hearing to the material senses. Though You have no material senses, You do have spiritual senses arising from Your *svarūpa-śakti*, internal energy." The *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (6.8) declares:

na tasya kāryaṁ karaṇaṁ ca vidyate

na tat-samaś cābhyadhikaś ca dṛśyate

parāsya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate

svābhāvikī jñāna-bala-kriyā ca

"He has no material work to perform, nor any material senses with which to perform it. No one can be found who is equal to or greater than Him. From the *Vedas* we hear how that Supreme Lord possesses multifarious energies— the potencies of knowledge, strength and action—each of which acts autonomously."

Next the *śrutis* speak of Lord Nārāyaṇa's great power: "The demigods like Brahmā, whose eyes do not blink (*animisāḥ*), bring You articles of worship (*balim*), along with even *māyā* (*ajaya*), their authority, who also makes offerings to You. By Your mercy the demigods eat the various sacrificial offerings presented to them by human beings, just as the leaders of various provinces give offerings made by the citizens to the king. These powerful controllers of the universe perform their assigned duties in fear of You." As the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (2.8.1) states:

bhīṣāsmād vātaḥ pavate bhīṣād eti sūryaḥ

bhīṣāsmād agniś cendraś ca mṛtyur dhāvati pañcamaḥ

"The wind blows out of fear of Him. The sun rises out of fear of Him. The fire, moon and death, the fifth of their number, run out of fear of Him."

|| 10.87.29 ||

sthira-cara-jātayaḥ syur ajayottha-nimitta-yujo

vihara udīkṣayā yadi parasya vimukta tataḥ

na hi paramasya kaścid aparo na paraś ca bhaved

viyata ivāpadasya tava śūnya-tulāṁ dadhataḥ

TRANSLATION

O eternally liberated, transcendental Lord, Your material energy causes the various moving and nonmoving species of life to appear by activating their material desires, but only when and if You sport with her by briefly glancing at her. You, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, see no one as an intimate friend and no one as a stranger, just as the ethereal sky has no connection with perceptible qualities. In this sense You resemble a void.

COMMENTARY

Having spoken of the power and independence of Lord Nārāyaṇa as reasons for His being worthy of worship, now the *śrutis* speak of the reasons for the *jīva* being His worshiper, namely his lack of power and lack of independence.

The *śrutis* said, "O ever-liberated (*vimukta:nitya-mukta*) Lord! When You, who remain far away from (*parasya:dūre*) *māyā* and do not associate with her, play (*viharaḥ:vihārah krīḍā*) with Mahā-M*āyā* (the energy of material creation) by slightly glancing (*udīkṣayā: īkṣaṇa-lesena*) at her, then the *jīvas* develop bodies endowed with movement or inertia."

Lord Nārāyaṇa**:** "But if all the *jīvas* are merged in Me, how can they appear again?"

Śrutis: "By Your glance the *jīvas* manifest (*syur:āvirbhūtāni*) the subtle bodies needed for material activities. The *jīvas* merge into You because of a merging of their illusory identities (*upādhis*) at the time of devastation (*pralaya*). The *jīvas* again appear when their *upādhis* manifest through Your glance. In this way, the *jīva's* lack of power is indicated by his being controlled by *karma*."

Lord Nārāyaṇa: "But then this awakening to activity takes place simply by My whim?"

Śrutis: "No, because You are free from partiality, You cannot produce an unfair creation. You are the faultless Supreme Personality of Godhead (*paramasya:nirdoṣa-puruṣottamasya*), so there cannot be any sense of "mine" and "others" (*aparo na paraś*), just as the ethereal sky (*viyataḥ*), which because of not being touched by anything, does not allow any partiality to abide in it. But this does not mean that You are exactly like the ether; rather ether has some similarity (*śūnya-tulāṁ*) to You."

In this connection, the Brhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad (2.1.20) states:

> *yathāgneḥ kṣudrā visphuliṅgā vyuccaranty evam evāsmād ātmanaḥ sarve prāṇāḥ sarve lokāḥ sarve devāḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni vyuccaranti,*

"Just as small sparks emanate from a big fire, similarly all living entities, all planets, all the demigods, and all material elements such as the earth emanate from the supreme soul, Śrī Govinda.

|| 10.87.30 ||

aparimitā dhruvās tanu-bhṛto yadi sarva-gatās

tarhi na śāsyateti niyamo dhruva netarathā

ajani ca yan-mayaṁ tad avimucya niyantṛ bhavet

samam anujānatāṁ yad amataṁ mata-duṣṭatayā

TRANSLATION

If the countless living entities were all-pervading and possessed forms that never changed, You could not possibly be their absolute ruler, O immutable one. But since they are Your localized expansions and their forms are subject to change, You do control them. Indeed, that which supplies the ingredients for the generation of something is necessarily its controller because a product never exists apart from its ingredient cause. It is simply illusion for someone to think that he knows the Supreme Lord, who is equally present in each of His expansions, since whatever knowledge one gains by material means must be imperfect.

COMMENTARY

The *śrutis* said, "There are widely differing theories among the various philosophers about this *jīva* who has accepted different moving and non-moving bodies. The Advaita Māyāvādīs, for example, propose that there is only one living being and one power of illusion (*avidyā*) that covers him, producing the appearance of plurality."

"But this hypothesis leads to the absurd conclusion that when any one *jīva* becomes liberated, everyone obtains liberation. If, on the other hand, there are many *avidyās* to cover the one *jīva*, each *avidyā* will cover only some part of him, and we would have to talk about his becoming partly liberated at particular times while his other parts remain in bondage. This is also obviously absurd. Thus the plurality of living beings is an unavoidable conclusion."

"The advocates of Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika claim that the *jīva* soul is infinite in size. If souls were infinitesimal, they would not pervade their own bodies, whereas if they were of medium size they would be divisible into parts and thus could not be eternal. Therefore, the numerous eternal *jīva* souls are each infinitely large, so how can they be covered by any power of bondage, whether belonging to *avidyā* or to the Supreme Lord Himself?" The *śrutis* then explain in this verse that others do not accept this opinion of the Nyāya philosophers.

The *śrutis* said, “If the countless (*aparimitāḥ:asankhyata*) living entities (*tanu-bhṛto*) were eternal (*dhruvāḥ:nityāḥ*), rather than being generated from You and also all-pervading, then because they would thus be equal to You, the scriptures would not say that they are under Your control. O Lord, You are perpetually in Your original form (*dhruvās:nityasvarūpa*), not otherwise (*netarathā*). That is to say, if they were generated from You, then they would not be all pervading, and thus would be under Your control.”

Lord Nārāyaṇa: “How is this?”

Śrutis: “Since the *jīvas* come into existence as an effect of Brahman, Brahman would be their controller. On account of being their source, He does not separate Himself from the *jīvas*.”

Lord Nārāyaṇa: “What is this Brahman?”

Śrutis: “He is equal (*samam:tulam*) toward all the *jīvas* in His expansion as Paramātmā.”

If someone asks what is known by the word “*tad*” (from that), the *śrutis* answer: “For those who say ‘we know it’ (*anujānatām*), it is for all extents and purposes unknown (*amatam*), because the *Vedas* say that knowledge gained by sense perception is imperfect (*mata-duṣṭatayā*).”

This is confirmed in the *Kena Upaniṣad* (2.3):

> *yasyāmataṁ tasya mataṁ mataṁ yasya na veda saḥ*
>
> *avijñātaṁ vijānatāṁ vijñātam avijānatām*
>
> “Whoever denies having any opinion of his own about the Supreme Truth is correct in his opinion, whereas one who has his own opinion about the Supreme does not know Him. He is unknown to those who claim to know Him, and can only be known by those who do not claim to know Him.”

The *śrutis* also say *avacanenaiva provāca*, “Although He cannot be described in words, the *Vedas* have described Him.” Also it is said, *saha tūṣṇīṁ babhūva*, “By not speaking He spoke and then became silent.”

The *Śrī Kena Upaniṣad* (2.1) states: *yadi manyase su-vedeti dabhram evāpi nūnaṁ tvam vettha brahmaṇo rūpaṁ, yad asya tvaṁ yad asya devesu*: “If you think you know

Brahman well, then your knowledge is very meager. If you think you can identify Brahman's form from among the demigods, indeed you know but little."

|| 10.87.31 ||

na ghaṭata udbhavaḥ prakṛti-pūruṣayor ajayor

ubhaya-yujā bhavanty asu-bhṛto jala-budbuda-vat

tvayi ta ime tato vividha-nāma-guṇaiḥ parame

sarita ivārṇave madhuni lilyur aśeṣa-rasāḥ

TRANSLATION

Neither material nature nor the soul who tries to enjoy her are ever born, yet living bodies come into being when these two combine, just as bubbles form where water meets the air. And just as rivers merge into the ocean or the nectar from many different flowers blends into honey, so all these conditioned beings eventually merge back into You, the Supreme, along with their various names and qualities.

COMMENTARY

It is seen that others criticize this doctrine. If you say that the *jīvas* are born from the Paramātmā, then that means the *jīvas* are not eternal. Every day, things created would be destroyed and uncreated things would come into being. Moreover, liberation would consist of the destruction of the *jīva's* essential identity. But his essential identity (*svarūpa*) is Brahman. Just as the unlimited sky becomes limited by a pot, and when the pot is broken the sky is again unlimited, similarly, when the designative coverings (*upādhis*) of the *jīva* are broken, then liberation is attained. What is called the "birth" of the *jīvas* is simply the birth of these *upādhis*; for the *jīva* itself is not born. In this verse, the *śrutis*, while glorifying the Lord, relate the philosophy of those who speak like this.

In this connection the question arises; "Does the form of the *jīva* arise from *prakrti*, from the *puruṣa* or from both?" If the *jīva* arises from *prakrti*, then the *jīva* would be without consciousness. If the *jīva* arises from the *puruṣa*, then the *puruṣa* is subject to tranfor-mation. In the first line of this verse, the *śrutis* reject the third alternative that the *jīva* arises from both *prakrti* and the *puruṣa*, because the *śrutis* declare that the *jīva* is unborn (*ajayor*).

This is confirmed in the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (4.5):

> *ajām ekāṁ lohita-śukla-kṛṣṇāṁ, bahvīḥ prajāḥ sṛjamānāṁ sa-rūpāḥ ajo hy eko juṣamāṇo 'nusete, jahāty enāṁ bhukta-bhogam ajo 'nyaḥ*

> “Material nature consists of three modes goodness, passion, and ignorance and is the mother of the innumerable living beings within the universe. It is brought into existence and supported by the one unborn Lord, who is full in self-knowledge. That unborn Lord, however, does not consort with His material energy. He independently enjoys the pleasure of His transcendental pastimes. The living entity, however, enjoys her and thus becomes perpetually bound.”

“The combination of material nature (*prakrti*) and her controller (*puruṣa*) that produces the countless conditioned souls in material creation is compared here to the combination of water and air that produces limitless bubbles (*budbuda*) of foam on the surface of the sea. Just as the efficient cause, air, impels the ingredient cause, water, to form itself into bubbles, so by His glance the Supreme Puruṣa inspires *prakṛti* to transform herself into the array of material elements and the innumerable material forms that manifest from those elements. Because the scriptures speak of the *upādhis*, designative coverings, merging into Brahman again when they are destroyed, even their birth is not actual.” This the *śrutis* state in the third line of the verse.

The words beginning *tato* (therefore) state that since the *jīvas* (*te ime*) are not actually born, therefore (*tato*), they merge along with their various names and qualities into You. The dissolution of the living being’s (*jīvas*) material condition occurs in two ways, partial and complete. In liberation (*mukti*) or the ultimate dissolution (*ātyantika-laya*), the *jiva’s* designative coverings (*upādhis*) of the gross and subtle bodies and also the *upādhis* of ignorance (*avidyā*), which is their cause, all become dissolved, just as rivers (*sarita:nadyaḥ*) merge into the ocean. In other words, all the false material designations of the *jīvas* are given up at the time of liberation.

Partial dissolution occurs when the soul experiences deep, dreamless sleep (*suṣupti*) and appears to leave his body. Partial dissolution also occurs when all souls reenter the body of Mahā-Viṣṇu at the time of universal annihilation (*pralaya*). In deep sleep and during the annihilation of the universe, however, only the designative coverings (*upādhis*) of the gross and subtle bodies are dissolved, and not that of their cause, *avidyā*, ignorance. These different types of dissolution are just like honey, which contains the tastes of the nectar of different flowers (*aśeṣa-rasāḥ:sakala-kusuma-rasāḥ*). Even though these tastes are not individually perceivable, they are perceived in a general sense. These points are corroborated in the following *śrutis*:

yathā nadyaḥ syandamānāḥ samudre

’staṁ gacchanti nāma-rūpe vihāya

tathā vidvān nāma-rūpād vimuktaḥ

parāt-paraṁ puruṣam upaiti divyam

> “As rivers flow to their dissolution in the sea, giving up their names and forms at their destination, so the wise man who becomes free from material names and forms attains to the Supreme Absolute, the wonderful Personality of Godhead.” (*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 3.2.8)

yathā saumya madhu madhu-kṛto nistiṣṭhanti nānātyayānāṁ vṛkṣānāṁ rasān samavahāram ekatāṁ saṅgayanti.

te yathā tatra na vivekaṁ labhante amuṣyāhaṁ vṛkṣasya

raso 'smy amuṣyāham raso 'smīty evam eva khalu saumyemāḥ

sarvāḥ prajāḥ sati sampadya na viduḥ sati sampadyāmahe

"My dear boy this partial dissolution resembles what happens when honeybees collect honey by extracting the nectar from the flowers of various kinds of trees and merge it all into a single mixture. Just as the mixed nectars cannot distinguish, 'I am the juice of such-and-such a flower,' or 'I am the juice of another flower,' so, dear boy, when all these living entities merge together they cannot consciously think, 'Now we have merged together.'" (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.9.1-2)

The verse quoted above from the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* refers to liberation, and the verse from the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* refers to universal annihilation (*pralaya*).

|| 10.87.32 ||

nṛṣu tava mayayā bhramam amīṣv avagatya bhṛśaṁ

tvayi su-dhiyo 'bhave dadhati bhāvam anuprabhavam

katham anuvartatāṁ bhava-bhayaṁ tava yad bhru-kuṭiḥ

sṛjati muhus tri-nemir abhavac-charaṇeṣu bhayam

TRANSLATION

The wise souls who understand how Your Māyā deludes all human beings render potent loving service to You, who are the source of liberation from birth and death. How, indeed, can fear of material life affect Your faithful servants? On the other hand, Your furrowing eyebrows—the triple-rimmed wheel of time—repeatedly terrify those who refuse to take shelter of You.

COMMENTARY

Having proposed various philosophies and rejected them, the *śrutis* now establish the Vaiṣṇava philosophy.

"The eloquent proponents of the various contending materialistic philosophies mentioned in the previous two verses may consider themselves very wise, but they are in fact all deluded by Kṛṣṇa's illusory potency, *māyā*. Recognizing this pattern of general delusion, Vaiṣṇavas offer their pure love (*bhāvam*) to Kṛṣṇa in the devotional moods of servitude, friendship and other mellows. Such pure Vaiṣṇavas experience delight (*prabhavaḥ:ullāsaḥ*) at every moment (*anu:prati-kṣaṇam*) because the object of their love is He who brings an end to material entanglement."

Or an alternate explanation: “They perform (*dadhati:kurvanti*) devotional service life after life (*anuprabhavam:prati-janmaiva*).” This point is mentioned in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*:

nātha yoni-sahasreṣu yeṣu yeṣu bhramāmy aham

tatra tatrācyutā bhaktir acyutāstu dṛḍhā tvayi

“O Lord Acyuta! Wherever I may wander among the thousands of species of life, may I always have undeviating devotion to You.”

Some philosophers will question how the Vaiṣṇavas can overcome their material entanglement without thorough analytic knowledge of the *jīva* and the Supreme Brahman, and without being disgusted with material life.

The personified *Vedas* answer, “There is no chance of material illusion continuing to act on Kṛṣṇa’s devotees, because even in the earliest stages of devotional service all fear and attachment are removed by the Lord’s grace. Only because of the extreme desireless-ness and the deep feelings of humility that arise from their cultivation of devotion do the Vaiṣṇavas still identify themselves as fallen in the material world. Thus, the razor sharp sword of time, in the form of the furrowing of Your eyebrows (*bhru-kuṭiḥ*), with its three divisions of past, present and future creates fear of disease, death and hellish suffering only for those who fail to worship Your feet. As Lord Rāma Himself says in the *Rāmāyana* (*Laṅkā-khaṇḍa* 18.33):

sakṛd eva prapanno yas tavāsmīti ca yācate

abhayaṁ sarvadā tasmai dadāmy etad vrataṁ mama

“If anyone even once surrenders to Me, pleading ‘I am Yours,’ I will give him eternal fearlessness. This is My solemn vow.” Furthermore, in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.14) Śrī Kṛṣṇa says,

daivī hy eṣā guṇa-mayī mama māyā duratyayā

mām eva ye prapadyante māyāṁ etāṁ taranti te

“This divine energy of Mine consisting of the three modes of material nature, is difficult to overcome. But those who have surrendered unto Me can easily cross beyond it.” The idea behind this is as follows:” Vaiṣṇavas are not eager to defeat other’s opinions and establish their own, as other philosophers are prone to do. The Vaiṣṇavas, however, are very eager to worship You, and for that they need not quarrel with any adverse philosophers. The Vaisnava philosophy is the essence of

all scriptures. Their conception of the Supreme Absolute Truth as the infinite ocean of personality and loving pastimes in His worshipable forms of Kṛṣṇa, Rāma and other divine manifestations, and their conception of themselves as His eternal servants, amount to the perfect conclusion of Vedānta philosophy in terms of the entities God (*tat*) and the self (*tvam*).

The Personality of Godhead and His emanations, such as the *jīva* souls, are simultaneously different and nondifferent, just like the sun and its expanding rays. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself affirms this: *sūkṣmānām apy ahaṁ jīvo*, "Among subtle things I am the spirit soul." (SB 11.16.11)

The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (3.1.9) also describes the measurement of the atomic spirit soul:

eṣo 'ṇurātmā cetasā veditavyo yasmin prāṇaḥ pañcadhā saṁviveśa

"The soul is atomic in size and can be perceived by perfect intelligence. This atomic soul is floating in the five kinds of air (*prāṇa, apāna, vyāna, samāna* and *udāna*)."

The *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (5.9) states:

bālāgra-śata-bhāgasya satadhā kalpitasya ca bhāgo
jīvaḥ sa vijñeyaḥ sa cānantyāya kalpate

"If the tip of a hair were divided into one hundred parts, and if one of those parts were again divided into a hundred parts, that one ten-thousandth part of the tip of the hair would be the dimension of the living entity."

The *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (5.8) says: *ārāgra-mātro hy aparo 'pi dṛṣṭaḥ*, "The spirit soul appears in such a small size that he measures only the width of the tip of an arrow." From these Vedic statements one can understand the infinitesimal size of the soul and its ability to pervade the whole body. The power of this minute *jīva* in the body can be compared to the healing power of a precious gem or a potent medicinal herb which can infuse invigorating energy throughout the body simply by being placed on the head or chest.

The *jīva's* traveling through various species of life in heaven or hell is due to the influence of his material coverings. This is mentioned by Dattātreya who says that by *prāṇa* a man takes repeated birth in the world (*yena saṁsarate pumān*).

There are more, *jīvas* than anyone can count, and each of them is eternally alive with consciousness, as the *śrutis* confirm: *nityo nityānāṁ cetanaś cetanānām* (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 5.13). When the *jīvas* are sent forth from the body of Mah*ā*-Viṣṇu at the beginning of material creation, they are all equal in the sense that they are all atomic particles of the Lord's marginal potency (*taṭastha-śakti*). But according to their differing conditions, they divide into four groups: Some are covered by ignorance, which obscures their vision like a cloud, and others become liberated from ignorance by knowledge mixed with devotion. A third group of souls become endowed with pure devotion, with a slight mixture of desire for speculative knowledge and fruitive activity. Those souls attain purified bodies composed of perfect knowledge and bliss with which they can engage in the Lord's service. Finally, there are Śrī Kṛṣṇa's eternal associates who never had any connection with ignorance.

The marginal position of the jīva soul is described in the *Nārada Pañcarātra*:

> *yat taṭa-sthaṁ tu cid-rūpaṁ sva-saṁvedyād vinirgatam*
>
> *rañjitaṁ guṇa-rāgeṇa sa jīva iti kathyate*
>
> "The marginal potency, who is spiritual by nature, who emanates from the self-cognizant *saṁvit* energy, and who becomes tainted by his attachment to the modes of material nature, is called the *jīva*."

The śruti, *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (2.1.20) says: *yathāgneḥ kṣudrā visphuliṅgā vyuccaranti*, "As many tiny sparks are manifested from a great fire, so many individual spirit souls are manifested from the Supreme."

If the *jīva* comes outside from the Personality of Godhead (*cid-rūpaṁ*), who is the amalgamation of all living consciousness (*sva-saṁvedyād:cit-puñjāt*), then he becomes colored by the influence of the three modes of the external energy. Māyā, and assumes various material forms. Because the minute *jīva* lives within the border between the Lord's external, illusory potency, Māyā, and His internal, spiritual potency, *cit*, the *jīva* is called *taṭa-stha*, "marginal."

When he earns liberation by cultivating devotion to the Lord, however, he comes completely under the shelter of the Lord's internal potency (*cit-śakti*). At that time he takes on a spiritual form produced by his great attachment to the Lord, and is no longer tainted by the modes of material nature. Such is the description of a worshiper (*upāsaka*) of the Lord.

Thus, in the same way as a person working for the king (*rājakīya-puruṣa*) is called *rāja-puruśa*, the living entity (*tvaṁ:jīva*) stands in a relationship with the supreme entity

(*tat*:Supreme Lord). Therefore, some authorities say the phrase *tat tvam asi* (You are that:Brahman) means "You belong to Him." The word *tat* stands for the possessive case (his) as an element in a compound word. Thus *tat tvam asi* means "You are his."

The object (*upāsya*) of the soul's worship is realized in three aspects: Brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān. Impersonal Brahman is like the radiant effulgence of the sun; the Supersoul, or Paramātmā, is like the sun globe; and the Personality of Godhead, Bhagavān, with His associates is like the presiding deity within the sun, who has his personal chariot, charioteer, assistants, and beautiful form, face, eyes, hands and feet.

Or, to cite another analogy: Travelers approaching a city from a distance cannot at first distinguish its features but rather see something vaguely shining ahead of them. As they come closer, they may discern a few of the taller buildings, trees, flagpoles and flags. Then, when they are sufficiently close, they will see the city as it is—a bustling metropolis with many citizens, residences, public buildings, highways and parks. In the same way, persons inclined to impersonal meditation may at best gain some realization of the Supreme Lord's effulgence (Brahman); those who approach closer can learn to see Him as the Lord in the heart (Paramātmā), but they will have scanty knowledge of His spiritual qualities. When they enter into intimate association however, and experience the unprecedented sweetness of God, they can know His full personality as Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

In this connection, the *Nṛsiṁha Purāṇa* states: *brahma-saṁjñam abhūd ekaṁ, jyotiryat sarva-kāraṇam*, "What is called Brahman is one light that is the cause of all. The *Hari-vaṁsa Purāṇa* says: *mama eva tad ghanaṁ tejo, jñātum arhasi bhārata*, "You should know the Brahman to be My condensed effulgence."

The *śrutis* say:

> *cayas tviṣām ity avadhāritaṁ purā tatā sarīrīti vibhāvitākṛtim, vibhur vibhaktāvayavaṁ pumān iti kramād amuṁ nārada ity abodhi saḥ*
>
> "Nārada gradually recognized the Lord, first perceiving Him as a mass of light, then as an embodied person, and then as the almighty Personality of Godhead with variously defined limbs."

Some Vaiṣṇavas take great care to understand their philosophy. Others however give no regard for it, and yet other always make it a point to ignore it. But they always give special attention to their own style of worship.

The *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* (1.22) states the same point.

etad viṣṇoḥ paraṁ padaṁ ye, nityodyuktāḥ saṁyajante na kāmāt

teṣām asau gopa-rūpaḥ prayatnāt, prakāśayed ātma-padaṁ tadaiva

"To they who always diligently worship Lord Visnu's transcen-dental form without any trace of material motivation, the Lord, in His original form as a cowherd boy (*gopa-rūpaḥ*), shows His lotus feet."

|| 10.87.33 ||

vijita-hṛṣīka-vāyubhir adānta-manas tura-gaṁ

ya iha yatanti yantum ati-lolam upāya-khidaḥ

vyasana-śatānvitāḥ samavahāya guroś caraṇaṁ

vaṇija ivāja santy akṛta-karṇa-dharā jaladhau

TRANSLATION

The mind is like an impetuous horse that even persons who have regulated their senses and breath cannot control. Those in this world who try to tame the uncontrolled mind, but who abandon the feet of their spiritual master, encounter hundreds of obstacles in their cultivation of various distressful practices. O unborn Lord, they are like merchants on a boat in the ocean who have failed to employ a helmsman.

COMMENTARY

"But," the Lord may say, "Even a Vaiṣṇava should follow the eightfold system of *yoga* to make his mind steady while worshiping Me."

Śrutis: "No, this is not necessary! Just by firm devotion to the feet of the divine spiritual master he can easily keep his mind steady. This has been stated already in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (7.15.25): *etat sarvaṁ gurau bhaktyā puruṣo hy añjasā jayet*, 'One can easily obtain all these goals simply by *guru-bhakti* (serving the spiritual master with faith and devotion.'"

"Otherwise, one may conquer his senses and vital air by the *yoga* process and still fail to tame his mind, which will continue to run like a wild horse. Nondevotees who try to control the mind without serving the feet of a spiritual master (*guroś caraṇaṁ*) will suffer unending anxiety (*vyasana-satānvitāḥ*) over the troublesome execution (*upāya-khidaḥ*) of various spiritual practices. And in the end they will drown in the vast ocean of material life. O unborn Lord, they are like merchants on a boat in the ocean who have failed to hire a competent helmsman."

In this regard the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (1.2.12) states: *tad-vijñānār-thaṁ sa gurum evābhigacchet samit-pāṇiḥ śrotriyaṁ brahma-niṣṭham*, “To understand thoroughly about God, one must humbly approach, with firewood in his hands, a spiritual master who is learned in the *Vedas* and firmly devoted to the Supreme Lord.” The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (6.14.2) says: *ācāryavān puruṣo veda*, “One who approa-ches a bonafide spiritual master can understand everything about spiritual realization.”

The *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (6.23) states:

> *yasya deva parā, bhaktir, yathā deve tathā gurau*
>
> *tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ, prakāsante mahātmanaḥ*
>
> “One who has unflinching faith in the Supreme Lord and the spiritual master, all the purports of the scriptures become revealed.”

|| 10.87.34 ||

svajana-sutātma-dāra-dhana-dhāma-dharāsu-rathais

tvayi sati kiṁ nṛṇām śrayata ātmani sarva-rase

iti sad ajānatāṁ mithunato rataye caratāṁ

sukhayati ko nv iha sva-vihate sva-nirasta-bhage

TRANSLATION

To those persons who take shelter of You, You reveal Yourself as the Supersoul, the embodiment of all transcendental pleasure. What further use have such devotees for their servants, children or bodies, their wives, money or houses, their land, good health or conveyances? And for those who fail to appreciate the truth about You and go on pursuing the pleasures of sex, what could there be in this entire world—a place inherently doomed to destruction and devoid of significance—that could give them real happiness?

COMMENTARY

In this way, the *śrutis* have spoken about the pure *bhakti* of the Vaiṣṇavas, which is not mixed with *yoga* or other processes. Now they establish that such *bhakti* must be devoid of other desires.

The *śrutis* said, “For one who has taken shelter of Your loving service and realized You as the Supersoul (*ātmani:paramātmani*), what use does he have for the various objects of worldly success such as servants, *svajanāḥ*; virtuous sons, *sutāḥ*; a beautiful body, *ātmā*; an attractive wife, *dārāḥ*; fabulous wealth, *dhanam*; a luxurious, celestial home,

dhāma; a vast estate, *dharā*; health and vitality, *asavaḥ*; and costly conveyances, *rathāḥ*? One who experiences the ecstasy of devotional service loses all attraction for these things, since he finds real satisfaction in the Supreme Lord, the reservoir of all pleasure (*sarve rase:ānanda*)."

In this regard, the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (4.3.32) states:

> *eṣāsya paramā gatir, eṣāsya paramā sampad eṣāsya parama loka, eṣāsya parama ānanda etasyaivānandasyānyāni, bhūtāni mātram upajīvanti.*
>
> "Devotional service is the supreme goal, the supreme wealth, the supreme abode and the supreme bliss. All varieties of ecstasy arise from it."

Śrutis**:** "For those who cannot appreciate the supreme spiritual happiness attained by realizing the Absolute Truth, and instead remain attached to the pleasure of sex life, what is there worthwhile to be found in this world?" The implied answer is that they derive pleasure from their servants, house, land and wealth.

One may object, "But why can't these material things give pleasure?"

Śrutis**:** "They are perishable, being under the grip of time (*sva-vihate*). Therefore, by their nature they are insignificant (*sva-nirasta-bhage*) even from their inception. And they are condemned by saints who understand the changeable nature of the material world."

The *Amara-kośa* dictionary gives the definition *bhagaṁ*: *srī-kāma-mahātmya-vīrya-yatnārka-kīrtiṣu*, "The word *bhaga* can mean fortune, lust, greatness, potency, effort, the sun or fame." The words *sva vihate* and *sva nirasta bhaga* also have the alternative reading *sva vihite* and *sva nirasta bhage*. In that case these words modify the word "*iha*" and mean, "The house and servants give pleasure to the materialistic people in this world (*iha*), which is temporary and devoid of good qualities by nature."

The *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* (Pūrva 15) concludes: *bhaktir asya bhajanaṁ tad ihāmutropādhi-nairāsyenāmuṣmin manaḥ-kalpanam etad eva naiṣkarmyam*, "Devotional service is the process of worshiping the Supreme Lord. It consists of fixing one's mind upon Him by renouncing all material desires (*upādhi:sakāmatvam*) for enjoyment in this world and the next. Indeed, this is true renunciation."

|| 10.87.35 ||

bhuvi puru-puṇya-tīrtha-sadanāny ṛṣayo vimadās

ta uta bhavat-padāmbuja-hṛdo 'gha-bhid-aṅghri-jalāḥ

dadhati sakṛn manas tvayi ya ātmani nitya-sukhe

na punar upāsate puruṣa-sāra-harāvasathān

TRANSLATION

Sages free from false pride live on this earth by frequenting the sacred pilgrimage sites and those places where the Supreme Lord displayed His pastimes. Because such devotees keep Your lotus feet within their hearts, the water that washes their feet destroys all sins. Anyone who even once turns his mind toward You, the ever-blissful Soul of all existence, no longer dedicates himself to serving family life at home, which simply robs a man of his good qualities.

COMMENTARY

In this verse, the *śrutis* state that saintly persons abandon their wives, homes and the other items mentioned above, and live peacefully in sacred places of pilgrimage which are favorable for worshiping Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

The *śrutis* said, "The prideless (*vimadās*) devotees (*rṣayaḥ*) live in the holy abodes of the Lord (*sadanāni:bhagavad-dhāmāni*). Because such devotees have realized the Lord's lotus feet in the core of their hearts (*bhavat-hṛdo-padāmbuja:manasi-tvat-padāmbujaṁ dadhānāḥ*), the water that washes their feet has the power to sanctify others. It goes without saying that such devotees have put aside all affection for their wives, children, friends and followers in order to absorb their minds in Your eternally blissful form."

"Even those Vaiṣṇavas who have meditated upon You for a moment lose interest in the pleasures of a materialistic family life (*vasathān:gṛhān*), which steals away the very essence of a man (*puruṣa-sāra-harā*); namely his good qualities of discretion, determination, sobriety, tolerance and peace of mind."

In this connection the *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* (2.26) says,

> *sakāmyā meroḥ śṛṅge yathā,*
>
> *sapta-pūryo bhavanti tathā niṣkāmyāḥ sakāmyāś ca bhūgola-cakre, sapta-pūryo bhavanti tāsāṁ madhye sākṣād brahma gopāla-purī hīti*

Lord Nārāyana said: “As on the summit of Mount Meru there are seven cities that fulfill all desires, similarly, on the earth planet there are seven cities that fulfill desires and grant liberation. Among them the city of Gopāla-purī (Mathurā) is directly the spiritual world.”

The *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* 54-55 says,

mathurāyāṁ sthitir brahman, sarvadā me bhaviṣyati

śaṅkha-cakra-gadā-padma, vana-mālāvṛtastu vai

Lord Nārāyaṇa continued, “O Brahmā, decorated with a forest-flower garland, and holding a conch, disk, mace and lotus, I will reside eternally in Mathurā.”

viśva-rūpaṁ paraṁ jyotiḥ, svarūpaṁ rūpa-varjitam hṛdā māṁ saṁsmaran brahman, mat-padaṁ yāti niscitam

“O Brahmā, he who with all his heart meditates on Me, whose form is the resting place of all forms, whose form is supremely powerful and splendid, whose form is wonderful, and who has no material form, goes to My abode. Of this there is no doubt.”

|| 10.87.36 ||

sata idaṁ utthitaṁ sad iti cen nanu tarka-hataṁ

vyabhicarati kva ca kva ca mṛṣā na tathobhaya-yuk

vyavahṛtaye vikalpa iṣito ’ndha-paramparayā

bhramayati bhāratī ta uru-vṛttibhir uktha-jaḍān

TRANSLATION

It may be proposed that this world is permanently real because it is generated from the permanent reality, but such an argument is subject to logical refutation. Sometimes, indeed, the apparent nondifference of a cause and its effect fails to prove true, and at other times the product of something real is illusory. Furthermore, this world cannot be permanently real, for it partakes of the natures of not only the absolute reality but also the illusion disguising that reality. Actually, the visible forms of this world are just an imaginary arrangement resorted to by a succession of ignorant persons in order to facilitate their material affairs. With their various meanings and implications, the learned words of Your Vedas bewilder all persons whose minds have been dulled by hearing the incantations of sacrificial rituals.

COMMENTARY

Someone may object, “But how can you criticize the home for taking away the good qualities of men (verse 34), and at the same time praise the home for giving men good qualities (verse 35)? It cannot be said that a mirage of water is both dry and thirst quenching.”

“The *śrutis* that adhere to the philosophy of *sat-kārya-vāda* (that the universe is a real manifestation of Brahman) speak in agreement with the *śrutis* who adhere to *asat-kārya-vāda* (the philosophy that this universe is unreal), saying that the visible world (*idam:visvam*) is permanently real because it is generated from the permanent reality, but not that it is *sat*, permanent, in its own right. Just as a pot when resolved to its cause is not a pot, but merely the reality expressing itself through the pot.”

The Sanskrit ablative expression *sataḥ*, “from the eternal reality,” implies a definite separation of cause and effect. Therefore, what is created from *sat*, the permanent reality, must be significantly different from it—in other words, temporary. In this way the argument of the materialists is flawed because it proves just the opposite of what it is intended to prove (*tarka-hatam*), namely that the world as we know it is all that exists, that it is eternal, and that there is no separate, transcendental reality.

The Karma mīmāṁsā logicians may argue, “We do not propose that they are the same. But we are denying their difference, since they are produced from the *sat*, just as golden earrings arise from gold. Effects can never exist without existence of a cause.”

Anticipating this reply, the Vaiṣṇavas refute it by the phrase *vyabhicarati kva ca* (some cases are inconsistent). “There are counterexamples that deviate from the general rule. Indeed, sometimes the source is very different from what it produces, as in the case of a man and his young son, or of a hammer and the destruction of a clay pot.”

Then Mīmāṁsakas say, “But just as illusory silver has no existence separate from the real existence of the oyster shell, so the material creation has no existence of its own separate from that of its foundation, the Supreme Lord.”

The personified *Vedas* reply, “No, this universe is not false in the same way as such illusions as the appearance of silver seen in an oyster shell; rather it is real, being called *ubhaya-yuk* because the source and its expanded manifestation (*kāraṇa-kāryayaḥ*) both join together in it.”

In other words, the *śrutis* say, “Both the Lord and the world are real (*tat satyam*). But, the existence of the cause (Supreme Lord) is eternal and the existence of effect (material world) is temporary, as is empirically perceived. Without the reality of the effect (this world), the ordinary dealings (*vyavahṛtaye*) of this world could not take

place. So for the purpose of effecting ordinary activities the created product (*vikalpah:kāryam*) is "desirable" (*iṣitaḥ*) in the sense of "real," since with real objects such as pots ordinary activities can be performed. The carrying of water and similar engagements cannot be done with imaginary pots." "But," the Karma-mīmāṁsakas counter, "Sometimes we see business conducted even with counterfeit coins."

Śrutis: "That business, the illusion of this world's permanence [which the Karma-mīmāṁsakas believe], is sustained by a succession of blind philosophers (*andha-paramparayā*), who learn this materialistic idea from their predecessors and pass on this illusion to their descendants. It is not perpetuated through a succession of wise men. Foolish people may be willing to exchange counterfeit coins among one another, but a wise man knows that such money is useless for the practical business of buying food, medicine and other necessities. Medicine purchased with counterfeit money will not yield good results. If such money is given in charity, it will not earn any pious credit."

"Therefore the material universe is real. According to the teachings of wise men like Nārada Muni and Ṛṣi Dattātreya, the world is real because it manifests meaningful activity. If the world were not real, the actions would also be unreal, just like the illusory silver seen in an oyster shell. By this teaching these learned authorities assert that the material world is real but not eternal, due to its being subject to destruction."

Karma-mīmāṁsakas: "But the *Vedic Saṁhitās* and *Brāhmanas* establish that the fruits of *karma* are eternal. For example, *apāma somam amṛta babhūma*: "We have drunk the *soma rasa* and become immortal." (*Ṛg Veda* 8.43.3) Therefore the world is eternal and will never be otherwise!"

Thus the Karma-mīmāṁsakas do not believe in the creation or destruction of the material universe. In this verse the *śrutis* reply to the *karma-vādīs*: "This proposition is invalid! O Lord! Your words of wisdom (*bhāratī*), comprising the *Vedas*, with their confusing variety of meanings in the semantic functions (*uru-vṛttibhiḥ*) of *gauṇa* and *lakṣanā* can be interpreted in many ways, either literally or metaphorically. Thus Your learned words bewilder (*bhramayati: mohayati*) those whose intelligence has been dulled (*jaḍān*) by too much faith in *karmic* rituals (*uktha*)."

The meaning of this is as follows: The *Vedas* never claim that the fruits of *karma* are eternal, but only indirectly they mention in metaphors the praiseworthiness of regulated sacrifices. Otherwise there would be a contradiction between one statement and another. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (8.1.16) clearly states that the results of ritual *karma* are impermanent: *tad yatheha karma-cito lokaḥ kṣīyate evam evāmutra puṇya-cito lokaḥ kṣīyate*, "Just as whatever benefit one works hard to attain in this world is eventually depleted, so whatever life one earns for oneself in the next world by his piety will also eventually end." Therefore, the philosophy of those intoxicated with *karma* is erroneous.

In this connection the *śrutis* proclaim:

yathorṇa-nābhiḥ sṛjate gṛhṇate ca

yathā pṛthivyām oṣadhayaḥ sambhavanti

yathā sataḥ puruṣāt keśa-lomāni

tathākṣarāt sambhavatīha viśvam

"As a web is expanded and withdrawn by a spider, as plants grow from the earth, and as hair grows from a living person's head and body, so this universe is generated from the inexhaustible Supreme." (*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 1.1.7). The word *ākṣarāt* in this verse indicates the cause of the universe's creation, which is being compared to different analogies, is eternal, while the created effect is real but not eternal. This verse states the opinion of the Vaiṣṇavas.

|| 10.87.37 ||

na yad idam agra āsa na bhaviṣyad ato nidhanād

anu mitam antarā tvayi vibhāti mṛṣaika-rase

ata upamīyate draviṇa-jāti-vikalpa-pathair

vitatha-mano-vilāsam ṛtam ity avayanty abudhāḥ

TRANSLATION

Since this universe did not exist prior to its creation and will no longer exist after its annihilation, we conclude that in the interim it is nothing more than a manifestation imagined to be visible within You, whose spiritual enjoyment never changes. We liken this universe to the transformation of various material substances into diverse forms. Certainly those who believe that this figment of the imagination is substantially real are less intelligent.

COMMENTARY

The personified *Vedas* repeat what they previously said with logic and clarity by presenting positive evidence to prove that this world is unreal in that it is temporary.

Śrutis: "This known universe did not exist before its creation, and it will not exist after the upcoming annihilation. It exists only between these two as an object of knowledge (*mitam:pramāna-viṣayī-bhūtam*)." Lord Nārāyaṇa asks, "Where does this happen?"

Śrutis: “It happens within You, the Supreme Lord who considers, ‘Let Me create such an illusory world.’ This world cannot be eternal since it did not exist before and will be destroyed in the future. It is shown to be real by comparing it with clay and gold which transform into pots and golden earrings. It is not false like the silver seen in an oyster shell or the rope mistaken for a snake.” The *vi* in *vibhāti* (appears) indicates the perceivable nature of the creation.

“Moreover, the *jñānis* who think (*avayanti*) that this world is false, a mere mental fantasy, and the Karma-mīmāṁsakas, who think that it is real and eternally existing, are both unintelligent (*abudhaḥ: apaṇḍitāḥ*).’”

|| 10.87.38 ||

sa yad ajayā tv ajām anuśayīta guṇāṁś ca juṣan

bhajati sarūpatāṁ tad anu mṛtyum apeta-bhagaḥ

tvam uta jahāsi tām ahir iva tvacam ātta-bhago

mahasi mahīyase ’ṣṭa-guṇite ’parimeya-bhagaḥ

TRANSLATION

The illusory material nature attracts the minute living entity to embrace her, and as a result he assumes forms composed of her qualities. Subsequently, he loses all his spiritual qualities and must undergo repeated deaths. You, however, avoid the material energy in the same way that a snake abandons its old skin. Glorious in Your possession of eight mystic perfections, You enjoy unlimited opulences.

COMMENTARY

Having declared the reality of the world composed of the three modes of material nature and designated by the term (*idam*), the *śrutis* now speak of the *jīva*. Although the *jīva* is pure spirit, qualitatively equal with God, he becomes degraded under the power of material illusion, *māyā*.

The *śrutis* said, “Entranced by the allurements of Māyā, the pure *jīva* soul becomes covered by ignorance and the qualities of material nature. Thus tainted by material designations, he accepts (*bhajati*) bodies and senses produced from the raw material of Māyā’s three modes— goodness, passion and nescience. Subsequently (*tad anu*), his qualities like bliss become covered, and he undergoes repeated birth and death (*mṛtyum*) in this world.”

Lord Nārāyaṇa said, “But since I, the Supreme Soul, share the same spiritual nature as the individual spiritual soul (*jīva*), do I also get covered by ignorance?”

Śrutis: “No, this can never happen! The *jīva* is an infinitesimal particle of consciousness, whereas You are the vast repository of consciousness. Smoke may engulf the glow of a small molten sphere of gold, brass or copper, but it can never cover the vast light of the sun. You, on the other hand (*tvam uta:tvam punaḥ*), leave Māyā aside (*jahāsi*).”

The meaning is this: The material Māyā potency is the outward expansion of Kṛṣṇa’s internal Yogamāyā potency. Her powers are described in the *Nārada Pañcarātra* in a conversation between Śruti and Vidyā,

> *asyā āvarika-śaktir mahā-māyākhileśvarī*
>
> *yayā mugdhaṁ jagat sarvaṁ sarve dehābhimāninaḥ*
>
> “The covering potency derived from Yogamāyā is called Mahā-māyā, the controller of the world. She bewilders the entire universe, and thus every living being falsely identifies with his material body.”

The *śrutis* continued, “Mahā-māyā is only a partial expansion of Your Yogamāyā, and is not regarded by You as part of Your internal energy; thus she becomes separated from You and left aside. She is called Your external (*bahir-aṇgā*) *māyā-śakti*. Just as a snake casts aside his old skin, knowing that it is not part of his essential identity, so You always avoid Mahā-māyā because You are eternally endowed with intrinsic glories (*ātta-bhagaḥ:nitya-prāptaisvaryaḥ*).”

To further reinforce their statement, the *śrutis* said, “You are worshiped (*mahīyase:pūjyase*) in Your eightfold mystic opulences (*mahasi:paramaisvarye*), such as *aṇimā* (the power to become infinitesimal) and *mahimā* (the ability to become infinitely large). What is their nature? You have unlimited powers, unlike the powers of others which are limited by time and space. And Your power is immeasurable because it is intimately related to Your internal nature.”

In this regard the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (4.5.) says:

> *ajām ekāṁ lohita-sukla kṛṣṇāṁ, vahvīḥ prajāḥ sṛjamānāṁ sarūpāḥ*
>
> *ajo hy eko juṣamāno’ nuśete jahaty enāṁ bhukta-bhogām ajo ’nyaḥ*
>
> “One unborn person, the *jīva*, is serving the unborn material nature, which generates numerous material bodies for the living entities and is composed of

goodness, passion and ignorance. The other unborn person, the Paramātmā, is detached from the enjoyment of material nature."

|| 10.87.39 ||

yadi na samuddharanti yatayo hṛdi kāma-jaṭā

duradhigamo 'satāṁ hṛdi gato 'smṛta-kaṇṭha-maṇiḥ

asu-tṛpa-yoginām ubhayato 'py asukhaṁ bhagavann

anapagatāntakād anadhirūḍha-padād bhavataḥ

TRANSLATION

Members of the renounced order who fail to uproot the last traces of material desire in their hearts remain impure, and thus You do not allow them to understand You. Although You are present within their hearts, for them You are like a jewel worn around the neck of a man who has totally forgotten it is there. O Lord, those who pratice yoga only for sense gratification must suffer punishment both in this life and the next: from death, who will not release them, and from You, whose kingdom they cannot reach.

COMMENTARY

Thus in three verses it was established that mundane homes steal away a man's essential qualities. The sages who were mentioned in the verses are of two kinds: the worshippers of formless (*nirguṇa*) Brahman called *jñānis*, and the worshippers of qualitative (*sa-guṇa*) Brahman called *bhaktas* or devotees. Both attain success by remai-ning free from delusion and by strict adherence to their paths. However, if these aspiring transcendentalists misbehave, then they attain the disastrous results described in these two verses

The *śrutis* said, "O Bhagavān! If the *sannyāsī* worshippers of the impersonal Brahman do not uproot the lusty desires in their hearts, then You, though residing in their hearts, become most difficult to attain for such impure persons. How is this? Because You become like a forgotten jewel around their necks. Though the jewel is hanging there, because a person forgets about it, it is as good as not being there. Although such *sannyāsīs* make a pretense of *yoga*, they are primarily interested in sense enjoyment, so they only experience unhappiness and misery both this life and the next." In this connection, the personified *Vedas* describe how the imperso-nalistic renunciants, who have failed to attain liberation, must suffer life after life as a result of their painful endeavors to acquire name, fame, wealth and sense gratification.

The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (3.2.2) confirms the statements of this verse:

kāmān yaḥ kāmayate manyamānaḥ sa karmabhir jāyate tatra tatra

"Even a thoughtful renunciant, if he maintains any worldly desires will be forced by his *karmic* reactions to take birth again and again in various circumstances."

|| 10.87.40 ||

tvad avagamī na vetti bhavad-uttha-śubhāśubhayor

guṇa-viguṇānvayāṁs tarhi deha-bhṛtāṁ ca giraḥ

anu-yugam anv-ahaṁ sa-guṇa gīta-paramparayā

śravaṇa-bhṛto yatas tvam apavarga-gatir manu-jaiḥ

TRANSLATION

When a person realizes You, he no longer cares about his good and bad fortune arising from past pious and sinful acts, since it is You alone who control this good and bad fortune. Such a realized devotee also disregards what ordinary living beings say about him. Every day he fills his ears with Your glories, which are recited in each age by the unbroken succession of Manu's descendants, and thus You become his ultimate salvation.

COMMENTARY

In this verse, the *śrutis* explain how neophyte devotees on the other hand, even though they may misbehave, still do not suffer in this life and the next like the impersonal *sannyāsīs*. Rather, they attain success.

"One whose nature is to recognize You as his object of worship (*tvad-avagamī:tvām bhajanīyatvenāvagantuṁ sīlaṁ yasya saḥ*) is not aware of the good or bad actions produced by You." In this regard the *Gopāla-tāpanī śrutī* (Pūrva 15) states: *bhaktir asya bhajanaṁ tad ihāmutropādhi-nairāsyenāmuṣmin manaḥ-kalpanam etad eva naiṣkarmyam*. '*Bhakti*, devotional service, is the process of worshi-ping the Supreme Lord by concentrating the mind upon Him, and renouncing all material desires (*upādhi*) for enjoyment both in this life and the next. *Bhakti* destroys all *karmas*.'

"Since a devotee becomes free from all *karmic* reactions by worship-ing You, the apparent good and bad events he experiences are not the result of his *karma*, but rather they are personally arranged by You (*bhavad-uttha-subhāśubhayor*). You do this in order to protect the confidentiality of devotion to You, or to avoid uprooting the opinions of the atheists, or to increase the longing in Your devotee. Or these apparently auspicious and inauspicious material reactions appear as the results of offenses against Your devotees (*vaiṣṇava-aparādha*). You make these experiences

appear in such a way that the devotee seems to be suffering the reactions of his *karma*."

"However, the devotee ignores the apparent good and bad reactions of the work he does only for Your pleasure. In other words, if someone praises him, 'This devotee is merciful, tolerant and generous,' or condemns him, 'This devotee is greedy, hypocritical and attached to sense enjoyment,' the devotee is not overly concerned about it. At these times, the humble devotee does not pay much attention to the words of any person (*deha-bhṛtām*), be he high or low, which praise or denounce him. He thinks to himself, If these people mistakenly see good qualities in me and express praise, let them do it. If others see my real qualities of being attached to sense gratification and criticize me, then this is perfectly appropriate.'

The *śrutis* then explain the reasoning behind this: "By continually singing day after day (*anv-ahaṁ:ahani ahani*) about You, who incarnate in every *yuga* (*anu-yugam*) and are the ocean of transcen-dental qualities (*sa-guṇa*), the mighty current of Your *nāma-saṅkīrtana* fills up the devotee's ears (*sravaṇa-bhṛto*), and thus he quickly attains love, *kṛṣṇa-prema*, for You, the ultimate goal of liberation (*apavarga-gatir*)."

According to the prose statement in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (4.30.30), the phrase *apavarga-gatir* (goal of liberation) means the bestower of pure loving service, or else that destination in com-parison with even the four goals of life (*dharma, artha, kāma, mokṣa*) are most despicable.

As Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa states in the *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* (51-53):

tair ahaṁ pūjanīyo vai bhadrakṛṣṇa-nivāsibhiḥ

tad-dharma-gati-hīnā ye tasyāṁ mayi parāyaṇāḥ

kalinā grasitā ye vai tesāṁ tasyām avasthitiḥ

yathā tvaṁ saha putraiś ca yathā rudro gaṇaiḥ saha

yathā śrīyābhiyukto 'haṁ tathā bhakto mama priyaḥ

> "For those who live in Bhadrakṛṣṇa [Mathurā district], I am the object of all worship. Even if the residents of that place fail to properly cultivate the religious principles that one should observe in the holy land, they still become devoted to Me just by virtue of living there. Even if Kali [the present age of quarrel] has them in his grip, they still get credit for living in this place. My devotee who lives in Mathurā is just as dear to Me as you [Brahmā] and your sons—Rudra and his followers—and Goddess Śrī and My own self."

In this verse, the phrases *tad-dharma-gati-hīnāḥ* and *kalinā grasitāḥ* indicate wicked behavior, implying the idea “if one is wicked but lives in that Mathurā.” Thus, between the two worshippers, the fallen *sannyāsī* and the fallen devotee living in Mathurā, the impersonalist *sannyāsī* is criticized and the devotee is praised by the Lord.

This point is confirmed by Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (SB 11.18.40-41):

yas tv asaṁyata-ṣaḍ-vargaḥ pracaṇḍendriya-sārathiḥ

jñāna-vairāgya-rahitas tri-daṇḍam upajīvati

surān ātmānam ātma-sthaṁ nihnute māṁ ca dharma-hā

avipakva-kaṣāyo ’smād amuṣmāc ca vihīyate

“One who has not controlled the six forms of illusion [lust, anger, greed, envy, false pride and intoxication], whose intelligence, the leader of the senses, is extremely attached to material things, who is bereft of knowledge and detachment, who adopts the *sannyāsa* order of life to make a living, who denies the worshipable demigods, his own self and the Supreme Lord within himself, thus ruining all religious principles, and who is still infected by material contamination, is deviated and lost both in this life and the next.”

And in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa encourages His devotee:

api cet su-durācāro bhajate mām ananya-bhāk

sādhur eva sa mantavyaḥ samyag vyavasito hi saḥ

“Even if one commits the most abominable action, if he is engaged in devotional service he is to be considered saintly because he is properly situated in his determination.” (Bg. 9.30)

In this way Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa praises His devotee. By all means, the Lord agrees with the *śrutis* who are His followers at the end of their praises of Him.

|| 10.87.41 ||

dyu-pataya eva te na yayur antam anantatayā

tvam api yad-antarāṇḍa-nicayā nanu sāvaraṇāḥ

kha iva rajāṁsi vānti vayasā saha yac chrutayas

tvayi hi phalanty atan-nirasanena bhavan-nidhanāḥ

TRANSLATION

Because You are unlimited, neither the lords of heaven nor even You Yourself can ever reach the end of Your glories. The countless universes, each enveloped in its shell, are compelled by the wheel of time to wander within You, like particles of dust blowing about in the sky. The śrutis, following their method of eliminating everything separate from the Supreme, become successful by revealing You as their final conclusion.

COMMENTARY

The *śrutis* were attempting to define the Absolute Truth on the pretext of glorifying the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the vast ocean of eternity, knowledge and bliss. But since they could not reach the limit of His qualities, they gave up and concluded their praises by indicating they were all in agreement.

The following conversation between Lord Nārāyaṇa and the personified *Vedas* illuminates the meaning of this final prayer of the śrutis: The *Vedas* said, "Lord Brahmā and the other rulers of the heavenly planets (*dyu-pataya*) cannot find the end of Your glories. What can we do, then, since we are insignificant in comparison to these great demigods?"

Lord Nārāyaṇa replied, "No, you *śrutis* are gifted with more sublime vision than those demigods. You will be able to reach the end of My glories if you do not stop now."

Śrutis: "But even You cannot find Your own limit!"

Lord Nārāyaṇa: "If that is the case, what do you mean when you say that I am all-knowing and all-powerful?"

Śrutis: "We conclude that You possess these features from the very fact that You are limitless. Certainly if one is ignorant of something that does not even exist, like a rabbit's horn, that does not detract from his omniscience. And if one fails to find such a nonentity, that does not limit his omnipotence. You are so vast that multitudes of universes float within You. Each of these universes is surrounded by seven shells composed of the material elements, and each of these concentric shells is ten times larger than the one within it. Although we can never fully describe the truth about You, we perfect our existence by declaring that You are the true topic of the *Vedas*."

Lord Nārāyaṇa: "But why do you seem dissatisfied?"

Śrutis: “Because in the *Vedas* Śrīla Vyāsadeva has described the transcendental existence of Brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān only briefly. When he saw the need to elaborate on his description of the Supreme, he chose to concentrate on the subject of Brahman, the impersonal aspect of the Supreme known as *tat* “that.” He described Brahman by negating whatever is different from it. Just as in a field where a chest of jewels has been accidentally spilled, the jewels can be recovered by removing unwanted stones, twigs and refuse. Similarly, within the visible realm of Māyā and her creations the Absolute Truth can be found by a process of elimination.”

“We *Vedas* cannot possibly enumerate every material category, individual entity, quality and motion in the universe from the beginning to the end of time. Even if we tried to describe all these things and then discarded them, the truth concerning Brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān would still remain untouched. Therefore, by this means of investigation we can never expect to reach a final definition of You. Only by Your mercy can we make some attempt to approach You, the supremely inaccessible Absolute Truth.” This idea has been indicated previously in verses 14 (*akhila-sakty-avabodhaka te*) 27 (*tava pari ye paricaranti*); 32 (*nṛṣu tava māyayā*); 2 (*brāhmī upaniṣat*)

There are many statements of śruti that describe the process of distinguishing the Supreme from everything inferior (*atan-nirasanam*). The *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (3.8.8), for example, states,

> *asthūlam anaṇu ahrasvam adīrgham alohitam*
>
> *asneham acchāyam atamo ’vāyv anākāśam asaṅgam*
>
> *arasam agandham acakṣuṣkam aśrotram agamano ’tejaskam*
>
> *aprāṇam asukham amātram anantaram abāhyam*

> “It is neither big nor small, short nor long, hot nor cool, in shadow nor in darkness. Nor is it the wind or the ether. It is not in contact with anything, and it has no taste, smell, eyes, ears, motion, potency, life air, pleasure, measurement, inside or outside.”

|| 10.87.42 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

ity etad brahmaṇaḥ putrā āśrutyātmānuśāsanam

sanandanam athānarcuḥ siddhā jñātvātmano gatim

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord, Śrī Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi, said: Having heard these instructions about the Supreme Self, the Personality of Godhead, the sons of Brahmā now understood their final destination. They felt perfectly satisfied and honored Sanandana with their worship.

COMMENTARY

By hearing the twenty-eight prayers of the personified Vedas, which comprise the elucidation of the Brahma Upaniṣad spoken in verse two of this chapter (*buddhīndriya-manaḥ-prāṇān*), the sons of Brahmā assembled in Brahmaloka made great progress toward their goal (*ātmano gatim*) of pure love of God (*bhagavat-prema*).

|| 10.87.43 ||

ity aśeṣa-samāmnāya-purāṇopaniṣad-rasaḥ

samuddhṛtaḥ pūrva-jātair vyoma-yānair mahātmabhiḥ

TRANSLATION

Thus the ancient saints who travel in the upper heavens distilled this nectarean and confidential essence of all the Vedas and Purāṇas.

|| 10.87.44 ||

tvaṁ caitad brahma-dāyāda śraddhayātmānuśāsanam

dhārayaṁś cara gāṁ kāmaṁ kāmānāṁ bharjanaṁ nṛṇām

TRANSLATION

And as you wander the earth at will, My dear son of Brahmā, you should faithfully meditate on these instructions concerning the science of the Self, which burn up the material desires of all men.

COMMENTARY

Śrī Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi said, “O Nārada, son of Brahmā (*brahma-dāyāda*)! With great faith take this supreme teaching which destroys attachment to the world, and wander on this earth as you desire.”

|| 10.87.45 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

evaṁ sa ṛṣiṇādiṣṭaṁ gṛhītvā śraddhayātmavān

pūrṇaḥ śruta-dharo rājann āha vīra-vrato muniḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: When Śrī Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi ordered him in this way, the self-possessed sage Nārada, whose vow is as heroic as a warrior's, accepted the command with firm faith. Now successful in all his purposes, he thought about what he had heard, O King, and replied to the Lord as follows.

COMMENTARY

Meditating on the meaning of what he had heard (*śruta-dharo*), Nārada held strongly to his promise (*vrataḥ:pratijñā*) and replied to Lord Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi.

|| 10.87.46 ||

śrī-nārada uvāca

namas tasmai bhagavate kṛṣṇāyāmala-kīrtaye

yo dhatte sarva-bhūtānām abhavāyośatīḥ kalāḥ

TRANSLATION

Śrī Nārada said: I offer My obeisances to Him of spotless fame, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, who manifests His all-attractive personal expansions so that all living beings can achieve liberation.

COMMENTARY

Nārada, discerning the real meaning of the *Vedas*' prayers, then openly acknowledges in this verse the supreme position of Kṛṣṇa, even above Nārāyaṇa.

Among the different spiritual paths such as *jñāna* and *yoga* mentioned in the *śrutis*' praises, *bhakti* is the best. Among the different worshippers, the devotees are the best. Among the objects of worship, namely Brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān, Bhagavān is best. Nārada Muni has concluded this from all the statements of the *śrutis*. He has further concluded that even in Bhagavān, however, Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme as understood from verses 17 and 23.

To indicate this, Nārada loudly recites this verse directly in front of Nārāyaṇa: *namas tasmai bhagavate*, "I offer my respects to Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa." To say *namas tubhyaṁ nārāyāṇāya*, "I offer my respects to Nārāyaṇa" would have been contrary to his feelings. Nārada said, "I offer my respects to He who is famous for removing the contamination (*āmala-kīrtaye*) of ignorance by giving liberation even to the demons."

Lord Nārāyana Ṛṣi asked, “Why are you offering your respects to Kṛṣṇa instead of Me, your *guru*, who am standing here before you?”

Nārada replied, “Śrī Kṛṣṇa accepts various beautiful forms (*uśatīḥ kalāḥ*) such as your self to end the conditioned souls’ material life (*abhavāya*).”

By offering obeisances to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, therefore, Nārada honors Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi and all other incarnations of Godhead as well. This prayer of Nārada’s is the essential nectar he has extracted from the personified Vedas’ prayers, which themselves were churned from the sweet ocean of all secrets contained in the Vedas and Purāṇas. As the *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* (Pūrva 50) recommends, *tasmāt kṛṣṇa eva paro devas taṁ dhyāyet taṁ rasayet taṁ bhajet taṁ yajed iti. oṁ tat sat*: “Therefore Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Godhead. One should worship Kṛṣṇa, surrender fully to Kṛṣṇa, meditate on Kṛṣṇa, and relish the taste of reciprocating loving exchanges with Kṛṣṇa.”

|| 10.87.47 ||

ity ādyam ṛṣim ānamya tac-chiṣyāṁś ca mahātmanaḥ

tato ’gād āśramaṁ sākṣāt pitur dvaipāyanasya me

TRANSLATION

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] After saying this, Nārada bowed down to Śrī Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi, the foremost of sages, and also to His saintly disciples. He then returned to the hermitage of my father, Dvaipāyana Vyāsa.

COMMENTARY

The word *iti* can mean either method or completion. Thus there are two meanings of this verse.

Nārada paid respects to Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi in this manner (*iti*) by reciting prayers to Kṛṣṇa. Then he left his *āśrama* (*tataḥ:*Nārāyaṇāśrama) and went to Vyāsadeva’s *āśrama*.

Or the meaning can be: After completing (*iti*) his prayers to Kṛṣṇa, Nārada Muni offered his respects to Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi and went to the *āśrama* of Vyāsadeva.

|| 10.87.48 ||

sabhājito bhagavatā kṛtāsana-parigrahaḥ

tasmai tad varṇayām āsa nārāyaṇa-mukhāc chrutam

TRANSLATION

Vyāsadeva, the incarnation of the Personality of Godhead, respectfully greeted Nārada Muni and offered him a seat, which he accepted. Nārada then described to Vyāsa what he had heard from the mouth of Śrī Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi.

COMMENTARY

Being honoured by Vyāsa (*bhagavatā*) with a respectable seat, Nārada sat down and described to Vyāsa (*tasmai*) the knowledge of God he had heard from Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi.

|| 10.87.49 ||

ity etad varṇitaṁ rājan yan naḥ praśnaḥ kṛtas tvayā

yathā brahmaṇy anirdeśye nīrguṇe 'pi manaś caret

TRANSLATION

Thus I have replied to the question You asked me, O King, concer-ning how the mind can have access to the Absolute Truth, which is indescribable by material words and devoid of material qualities.

COMMENTARY

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said, "O King Parīkṣit! I have replied to you how the mind can conceive of God who is beyond material conceptions and without material qualities." The answer is: The mind can perceive God by the power of devotion (*bhakti*) arising from the mercy of the Supreme Lord.

|| 10.87.50 ||

yo 'syotprekṣaka ādi-madhya-nidhane yo 'vyakta-jīveśvaro

yaḥ sṛṣṭvedam anupraviśya ṛṣiṇā cakre puraḥ śāsti tāḥ

yaṁ sampadya jahāty ajām anuśayī suptaḥ kulāyaṁ yathā

taṁ kaivalya-nirasta-yonim abhayaṁ dhyāyed ajasraṁ harim

TRANSLATION

He is the Lord who eternally watches over this universe, who exists before, during and after its manifestation. He is the master of both the unmanifest material energy and the spirit soul. After sending forth the creation He enters within it, accompanying each living entity. There He creates the material bodies and then remains as their regulator. By surrendering to Him one can escape the embrace of illusion, just as a dreaming person forgets his own

body. One who wants liberation from fear should constantly meditate upon Him, Lord Hari, who is always on the platform of perfection and thus never subject to material birth.

COMMENTARY

Summarizing the meaning of all the prayers of the personified *Vedas*, Śukadeva makes us again remember the facts: "By glancing (*utprekṣakaḥ*) upon the dormant universe at the time of sending forth the *jīva* souls into creation, the Supreme Lord provides all their necessities: For the fruitive workers (*karmīs*), Kṛṣṇa provides the intelligence, mind, senses and *prāṇa* needed to achieve the fruits of their *karma*, namely material sense enjoyment. For the *jñānis*, the Lord provides the intelligence by which they can attain liberation by merging into His spiritual effulgence. And for the devotees (*bhaktas*), the Lord helps them attain His association in an eternal loving relationship. Thus in each of these ways the Supreme Lord thinks of where He can send each *jīva* in the material realm."

"It is the Supreme Lord alone who is constantly present before, during and after the manifestation of the created cosmos." Lord Nārāyana Himself states this in the *Catuḥ-ślokī* of the *Bhāgavatam*:

> *aham evāsam evāgre nānyad yat sad-asat-param*
>
> *paścād aham yad etac ca yo 'vaśiṣyeta so 'smy aham*
>
> "It is I, the Personality of Godhead, who was existing before the creation, when there was nothing but Myself. Nor was there the material nature, the cause of this creation. That which you see now is also I, the Personality of Godhead and after annihilation what remains will also be I, the Personality of Godhead." (SB. 2.9.33)

Next Śukadeva describes how the Supreme Lord is the cause and controller (*'vyakta-jīveśvaro*) of everything in the entire universe, which is composed of *māyā* and the *jīva*. Because they are both His energies and because His energies are not different from their source, the *śaktimān*, the unmanifest nature, *māyā*, and the *jīva* are both Him alone. This establishes that the Supreme Lord is the ingredient cause of creation (*upādāna-kāranam*), the efficient cause (*nimitta-kāraṇam*) and also the supreme controller.

Śukadeva Gosvāmī then speaks how the Supreme Lord also acts by entering the universe to effect the secondary creation (*visarga*): "After creating this universe the Supreme Lord creates the bodies (*puraḥ*) of the demigods, men, animals and others through the agency of Brahmā (*ṛṣinā*), and He controls them by His expansion as the Paramātmā, who, like a Vedic sage (*ṛṣinā*), is untouched by material contamination." The word *ṛṣinā* therefore has two functions here.

Then Śukadeva explains how the *jīva* can transcend material existence by devotion to the Lord: "By surrendering (*sampadya: prapadya*) to the Supreme Lord, the *jīva*, who is helplessly bound up in the embrace of illusion (*anuśayī:avidyāsliṣṭaḥ*), falls like a rod

to pay obeisances at the Lord's feet. By that surrender the soul becomes totally free from *māyā* (*ajām:māyām*), who creates all the objects of this world." According to Śrīdhara Swāmī, the word *anuśayī* means that the *jīva* lies down paying *dandavats* again and again (*anu-sayi*) to the Lord.

But, it could be argued that the devotee, even though he has surrendered to the Lord, still has a material body.

Therefore Śukadeva says, "A liberated soul pays no more regard to his body (*kulāyam:sva-sarīram*) than a sleeping (*suptaḥ*) man pays to his body while busily engaged far, far away in his dream world." This means that the devotee gives up ignorance by abandoning his false identification with his material body. It should be understood however that sometimes this giving up of ignorance is not based on proper surrender to the Lord as in the case of impersonalists.

But in some cases the Lord may show special consideration for one He favors, regardless of whether any *sādhana* has been performed. Even if a *jīva* has not practiced solitary *bhajana* (*kaivalya*) for attaining liberation, still the merciful Lord causes the "womb" (*yonim*) of the living entity's illusion to be dispelled (*nirasta*). In the words of Śrī Bhīṣmadeva, *yam iha nirīkṣya hatā gatāḥ svarūpam*: "Those who simply saw Kṛṣṇa on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra attained their original forms after being killed." (SB 1.9.39) That even demons like Agha, Baka and Kesī were liberated by Śrī Kṛṣṇa without having performed any spiritual practices is an indication of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's unique position as the original Personality of Godhead.

Knowing this, one should abandon all his doubts and fear of the various philosophers who speak nonsense under the sway of their own *karma* and the force of time. One should then incessantly meditate upon Lord Hari, who by His charming sweetness steals away the mind of those endowed with *prema*.

I [Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura] take the opportunity to offer this humble prayer:

> *he bhaktā dvāry ayaṁ cañcad-vāladhī rauti vo manāk*
>
> *prasādaṁ labhatāṁ yasmād viśiṣṭaḥ śveva nāthati*
>
> "O devotees! This person with an unsteady, dull mind is offering praises at your door. You should let him have a little mercy since he is expert and quickly does the soliciting."

The word *cañcad-vāladhī* can also mean "wagging tail," since *vāladhī* means tail according to the *Amara-kośa* dictionary. Thus the meaning would be as follows: "O devotees, this poor creature standing at your doorway is wagging his tail and barking.

Please let him have a little *prasādam* so that he may become exceptional among dogs and get the best of masters as his owner."

Embedded in the last line of the verse above is the word "*viśvanātha*." The word *viś* (*viśiṣṭaḥ*) means "exceptional," *sva iva* (*śveva*) means "like a dog," and the word *nātha* (*nāthati*) means "having a master." Therefore, *viśvanātha* means, "An exceptional dog having a master."

Or the meaning of *viśvanātha* can be, "one who begs in a special way." Or it can mean: "This is the method of achieving the association of the Lord of the universe, Viśvanātha."

Thus ends the commentary on the Eighty-seventh Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Lord Śiva Saved from Vṛkāsura

|| 10.88.1 ||

śrī-rājovāca

devāsura-manuṣyesu ye bhajanty aśivaṁ śivam

prāyas te dhanino bhojā na tu lakṣmyāḥ patiṁ harim

TRANSLATION

King Parīkṣit said: Those demigods, demons and humans who worship Lord Śiva, a strict renunciant, usually enjoy wealth and sense gratification, while the worshipers of the Supreme Lord Hari, the husband of the goddess of fortune, do not.

COMMENTARY

This chapter states that only Viṣṇu is worthy of worship because He is beyond the three modes of material nature. Lord Śiva, however, touches the material modes, and was put into danger by his own devotee, Vṛka. Viṣṇu and His devotees are always exchanging bliss on the transcendental platform, whereas Śiva and his devotees, caught up in the modes, only experience suffering. The personified *Vedas* have already stated that among the primary forms of Brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān, Bhagavān and his devotee are the best. Now in a chapter and a half it will be pointed out that amongst Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva, Viṣṇu is the most excellent and most worthy of service.

Parīkṣit Mahārāja said, “You ended the preceding chapter with the recommendation that one should always meditate on Lord Hari (*dhyāyed ajasram harim*), the bestower of liberation. Why then do ordinary people fear that they will lose their wealth and social status by worshiping Lord Hari and therefore instead worship Lord Hara [Śiva]? Persons with materialistic vision perceive Śiva as inauspici-ous (*aśivam*) because he covers his body with ashes from the crematorium and wears inauspicious items like skulls. But we see that the worshippers of Śiva enjoy abundant sense gratification (*bhojāḥ*), whereas the worshippers of Viṣṇu, the husband of the goddess of fortune, enjoy neither wealth nor sense gratification.”

|| 10.88.2 ||

etad veditum icchāmaḥ sandeho ’tra mahān hi naḥ

viruddha-śīlayoḥ prabhvor viruddhā bhajatāṁ gatiḥ

TRANSLATION

We wish to properly understand this matter, which greatly puzzles us. Indeed, the results attained by the worshipers of these two lords of opposite characters are contrary to what one would expect.

COMMENTARY

Viṣṇu and Śiva are of opposite (*viruddhā*) natures in the sense that those who worship Śiva, who lives like a beggar, become rich and powerful, while those who worship Viṣṇu, the master of the goddess of fortune, often become reduced to abject poverty.

|| 10.88.3 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

śivaḥ śakti-yutaḥ śaśvat tri-liṅgo guṇa-saṁvṛtaḥ

vaikārikas taijasaś ca tāmasaś cety ahaṁ tridhā

TRANSLATION

Śrī Śukadeva said: Lord Śiva is always united with his personal energy, the material nature. Manifesting himself in three features in response to the entreaties of nature’s three modes, he thus embodies the threefold principle of material ego in goodness, passion and ignorance.

COMMENTARY

Śiva is associated with the material energy (*śakti-yutaḥ*). He is surrounded by the modes, because they pleaded with him to be accepted. Although by that covering Śiva appears to be made of the three modes, he is not forcibly bound up by these modes like the *jīva*. Śiva’s relation with the three modes is elaborated upon in the words

beginning *vaikārikas* (false ego in the mode of goodness). The words *ahaṁ tridhā* indicate that Śiva embodies the three types of false ego in the modes of goodness, passion and ignorance.

|| 10.88.4 ||

tato vikārā abhavan ṣoḍaśāmīṣu kañcana

upadhāvan vibhūtīnāṁ sarvāsām aśnute gatim

TRANSLATION

The sixteen elements have evolved as transformations of that false ego. When a devotee of Lord Śiva worships his manifestation in any one of these elements, the devotee obtains all sorts of corresponding enjoyable opulences.

COMMENTARY

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said, "There are sixteen transformations of false ego: the mind, ten senses (the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, skin, hands, feet, voice, genitals and anus), and five physical elements (earth, water, fire, air and ether). People pursuing enjoyment of any of these, such as the genital, tongue or mind, worship Śiva and obtain the essence (*gatim:svarūpam*) of all types of material enjoyment (*vibhūtīnāṁ sarvāsām:sampatīnām*)."

"This means that because of the interdependence of all these elements, by attaining one, the *Śiva-bhakta* obtains all varieties of sense gratification. The attainment of pleasures is in proportion to the amount of worship. Thus, since Lord Śiva embodies the modes of material nature, and since material pleasures are manifestations of these three modes, it is by worshiping Śiva that one obtains them. Therefore what you said is not wrong."

|| 10.88.5 ||

harir hi nirguṇaḥ sākṣāt puruṣaḥ prakṛteḥ paraḥ

sa sarva-dṛg upadraṣṭā taṁ bhajan nirguṇo bhavet

TRANSLATION

Lord Hari, however, has no connection with the material modes. He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the all-seeing eternal witness, who is transcendental to material nature. One who worships Him becomes similarly free from the material modes.

COMMENTARY

How is Viṣṇu untouched by the three modes (*nirguṇa*) of material nature? He is situated in His own transcendental position, beyond the material energy. Therefore by worshiping Viṣṇu, who is beyond the modes, how can one get enjoyment produced by the material modes?

From Viṣṇu comes everyone's knowledge, including that of Śiva. Thus Lord Viṣṇu's worshipper gains the eye of transcendental knowledge instead of being blinded by mundane assets. The word *upadraṣṭā* (witness) indicates that because Viṣṇu is not contaminated by the material modes, He remains aloof, merely witnessing. Therefore by worshiping Viṣṇu one also becomes *nirguṇa*, untouched by the modes. Thus it will be stated later on, *yataḥ śāntir yato 'bhayam dharmaḥ sākṣād yato jñānaṁ vairāgyaṁ ca tad-anvitam*, "From Him comes peace, fearlessness, religion, knowledge and renunciation." (SB 10.89.14-15)

|| 10.88.6 ||

nivṛtteṣv aśva-medheṣu rājā yuṣmat-pitāmahaḥ

śṛṇvan bhagavato dharmān apṛcchad idam acyutam

TRANSLATION

Your grandfather, King Yudhiṣṭhira, after completing his Aśvamedha sacrifices, asked Lord Acyuta this very same question while hearing the Lord's explanation of religious principles.

|| 10.88.7 ||

sa āha bhagavāṁs tasmai prītaḥ śuśrūṣave prabhuḥ

nṛṇāṁ niḥśreyasārthāya yo 'vatīrṇo yadoḥ kule

TRANSLATION

This question pleased Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the King's Lord and master, who had descended into the family of Yadu for the purpose of bestowing the highest good on all men. The Lord replied as follows as the King eagerly listened.

|| 10.88.8 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

yasyāham anugṛhṇāmi hariṣye tad-dhanaṁ śanaiḥ

tato 'dhanaṁ tyajanty asya svajanā duḥkha-duḥkhitam

TRANSLATION

The Personality of Godhead said: If I especially favor someone, I gradually deprive him of his wealth. Then the relatives and friends of such a poverty-stricken man abandon him. In this way he suffers one distress after another.

COMMENTARY

A man suffers when he loses his wealth, and due to poverty He suffers even more due to being rejected by his relatives. Devotees of the Supreme Lord experience both happiness and distress—not as the fruits of their *karma* (material work) but as incidental effects of their loving reciprocation with the Lord. As stated in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (1.2.9): *dharmasya hy āpavargyasya*, "All occupational engagements are certainly meant for ultimate liberation. They should never be performed for material gain."

This is also demonstrated in the words of Bhīṣmadeva who said that devotees engage only in devotional service. Devotional scriptures such as *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* explain how a Vaiṣṇava is relieved of all *karmic* reactions, including those that have not yet begun to manifest (*aprārabdha*), those that are just about to manifest (*kūṭa*), those that are barely manifesting (*bīja*) and those that have manifested fully (*prārabdha*). As a lotus gradually loses its many petals, so a person who practices *bhakti-bhajana* has all his *karmic* reactions destroyed.

That *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* destroys all *karmic* reactions is confirmed in the *Gopāla-tāpanī śruti* (Pūrva 15): *bhaktir asya bhajanaṁ tad ihāmutropādhi-nairāsyenāmuṣmin manaḥ-kalpanam etad eva naiṣkarmyam*, "Devotional service is the process of worshiping the Supreme Lord. It consists of fixing the mind upon Him by becoming disinterested in all material designations, both in this life and the next. It results in the dissolution of all *karma*."

The meaning of this statement is that by becoming freed from material desires, a devotee can fix his mind and senses (*manaḥ-kalpanam*) in Kṛṣṇa's service (*bhakti-bhajanam*) and become free from *karma* (*naiṣkarmyam*). This must be the meaning because of the grammatical agreement of the words *bhajanam*, *manah kalpanam* and *naiskarmyam*. Therefore, by doing *bhajana* all *karmas* are destroyed, even though the devotee is still situated in the material body. This happens due to the inconceivable mercy of the Lord, who bestows the fruits of devotion.

Although the happiness and distress devotees experience resembles ordinary *karmic* reactions (*prārabdha*), they are in fact given by the Lord Himself. As the *Bhāgavatam* (10.87.40) states, *bhavad-uttha-śubhāsubhayoḥ*: A mature devotee recognizes the

superficially good and bad conditions he encounters as signs of the direct guidance of his ever well-wishing Lord.

“But if the Lord is so compassionate to His devotees, why does He expose them to special suffering?” This is answered by an analogy: A very affectionate father takes the responsibility of restricting his children’s play and making them go to school. He knows that this is a genuine expression of his love for them, even if the children cannot appreciate it. Similarly, the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu is mercifully strict with all His dependents, not only with immature devotees struggling to become qualified. Even perfect saints like Prahlāda and Dhruva were subjected to great tribulations, but in the end the Lord gave them profuse enjoyment of wealth and material happiness. On the other hand, persons like Yudhiṣṭhira, the crest jewel of perfected saints, experienced great unhappiness. After the Battle of Kurukṣetra, Bhīṣmadeva described to King Yudhiṣṭhira his wonder at this:

yatra dharma-suto rājā gadā-pāṇir vṛkodaraḥ

kṛṣṇo ’strī gāṇḍivaṁ cāpaṁ suhṛt kṛṣṇas tato vipat

na hy asya karhicid rājan pumān vetti vidhitsitam

yad-vijijñāsayā yuktā muhyanti kavayo ’pi hi

> “Oh, how wonderful is the influence of inevitable time! It is irreversible—otherwise, how can there be reverses in the presence of King Yudhiṣṭhira, the son of the demigod controlling religion; Bhīma, the great fighter with a club; the great bowman Arjuna with his mighty weapon Gāṇḍīva; and above all, the Lord, the direct well-wisher of the Pāṇḍavas? O King, no one can know the plan of the Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Even though great philosophers inquire exhaustively, they are bewildered.” (SB 1.9.15-16)

Thus the conclusion is that only the Lord Himself, being affectionate to His devotees, knows His intentions and no one else. One should refer to Bhīsmadeva’s prayers in the First Canto to consider all the points mentioned here. “But,” it may be questioned, “What distinguishes the happiness and distress caused by one’s own *karma* and that brought about by the Personality of Godhead?” Material happiness and distress, arising from *karma*, leave a subtle residue—the seed of desire (*karma-bīja*) which causes future entanglement. Such enjoyment and suffering tend toward degradation and increase the danger of falling into hellish oblivion. The happiness and distress generated from the Supreme Lord’s will, however, and not the *jiva’s* desires, leave no trace after their immediate purpose has been served. Moreover, the Vaiṣṇava who enjoys such reciprocation with the Lord is in no danger of falling down into hell. As Yamarāja, the lord of death, declares:

jihvā na vakti bhagavad-guṇa-nāmadheyaṁ

cetaś ca na smarati tac-caraṇāravindam

kṛṣṇāya no namati yac-chira ekadāpi

tān ānayadhvam asato ʻkṛta-viṣṇu-kṛtyān

> “My dear servants, please bring to me only those sinful persons who do not use their tongues to chant the holy name and qualities of Kṛṣṇa, whose hearts do not remember the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa even once, and whose heads do not bow down even once before Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Send me those who do not perform their duties toward Viṣṇu, which are the only duties in human life. Please bring me all such fools and rascals.” (SB 6.3.29)

Because the devotees are objects of the Lord’s affection, their suffering is never extreme. How can one consider the suffering arising from *karma* and that due to the Lord to be equal? One is like the pain arising from receiving a beating from an enemy, and the other is like that caused by one’s mother; one is like poison and the other is like nectar. “But is it that the Lord, who can do anything, cannot accomplish His purposes without giving distress to His devotees?”

“Yes, He, the reservoir of unlimited pastimes, cannot accomplish His purposes without this. But when He sometimes gives suffering to His beloved devotees, that suffering gives rise to great pleasure, just as a stinging ointment applied by a physician cures his patient’s infected eye. In addition, suffering protects the confidentiality of devotional service, prevents the disruption of the beliefs of the various categories of outsiders, and increases the eagerness with which the devotees call upon the Lord to appear. Moreover, if the devotees were complacently happy all the time, the Lord would never have a reason to appear in this world as Kṛṣṇa, Rāmacandra and Nṛsiṁha, since They come to protect the devotees and destroy the demons. As Kṛṣṇa Himself says in *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.8):

paritrāṇāya sādhūnāṁ vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām

dharma-saṁsthāpanārthāya sambhavāmi yuge yuge

> “To deliver the pious and annihilate the miscreants, as well as to reestablish the principles of religion, I appear millennium after millennium.”

Without the Lord’s showing Himself on earth in His original form of Kṛṣṇa and other incarnations, how would the devotees in this world be able to enjoy playing in the nectar ocean of the *rāsa-līlā* and His other pastimes’? “But what fault would there be in God’s incarnating for some other reason than to deliver saintly persons from suffering?”

“Yes, my dear brother, this makes good sense, but you are not expert in understanding spiritual moods. Please listen: The sunrise appears attractive because of the darkness

of night. During the hot summer cold water gives comfort, and during the cold winter months warm water is pleasing. Lamplight appears attractive in darkness, not in the glaring light of day, and when one is distressed by hunger, food tastes especially good. There is no need to elaborate more."

|| 10.88.9 ||

sa yadā vitathodyogo nirviṇṇaḥ syād dhanehayā

mat-paraiḥ kṛta-maitrasya kariṣye mad-anugraham

TRANSLATION

When he becomes frustrated in his attempts to make money and instead befriends My devotees, I bestow My special mercy upon him.

COMMENTARY

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said, "I will give My mercy (*kariṣye mad-anugraham*) to him. This is the second mercy. I will cause an extraordinary shower of sweet *bhakti-rasa* to rain down on My devotees. It was for this purpose that My first mercy bore the fruit of tormenting pain." In this verse the statement *kariṣye mad-anugraham*, "I give My mercy" can be better stated that "I give mercy in the form of My very self."

|| 10.88.10 ||

tad brahma paramaṁ sūkṣmaṁ cin-mātraṁ sad anantakam

vijñāyātmatayā dhīraḥ saṁsārāt parimucyate

TRANSLATION

A person who has thus become sober fully realizes the Absolute as the highest truth, the most subtle and perfect manifestation of spirit, the transcendental existence without end. In this way realizing that the Supreme Truth is the foundation of his own existence, he is freed from the cycle of material life.

COMMENTARY

In this verse, Śrī Kṛṣṇa explains how His special mercy is equal to Himself. Śrī Kṛṣṇa said, "My mercy is equal to Brahman, because it is supremely great and because it is imperceivable to persons with material vision. It is superexccllent (*paramam*) and subtle (*sūkṣmam*) in the sense it is inconceivable even to the devotee who is being shown mercy. It is purely spiritual (*cin-mātraṁ*) because of its ability to give experience of *prema-rasa* (the mellow of pure love), and because it is devoid of any material happiness. It exists through all time (*sat*), and because of it one has no fear of

death (*anantakam*). As a secondary result, My mercy destroys the cycle of birth and death (*samsārāt parimucyate*).”

Sometimes the half-verse beginning *vijñāyātmatayā* is read as part of this verse, but that is against the opinion of our *sampradāya*, according to *Śrī Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī* of Sanatana Gosvāmī.

|| 10.88.11 ||

ato māṁ su-durārādhyaṁ hitvānyān bhajate janaḥ

tatas ta āśu-toṣebhyo labdha-rājya-śriyoddhatāḥ

mattāḥ pramattā vara-dān vismayanty avajānate

TRANSLATION

Because I am difficult to worship, people generally avoid Me and instead worship other deities, who are quickly satisfied. When people receive kingly opulences from these deities, they become arrogant, intoxicated with pride and neglectful of their duties. They dare to offend even the demigods who have bestowed benedictions upon them.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa is difficult to worship because He destroys the happiness of mundane interactions. The person who worships demigods lacks insight (*pramattaḥ*), becomes proud, and then offends those who bestow benedictions.

|| 10.88.12 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

śāpa-prasādayor īśā brahma-viṣṇu-śivādayaḥ

sadyaḥ śāpa-prasādo ’ṅga śivo brahmā na cācyutaḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Lord Brahmā, Lord Viṣṇu, Lord Śiva and others are able to curse or bless one. Lord Śiva and Lord Brahmā are very quick to curse or bestow benedictions, my dear King, but the infallible Supreme Lord is not.

|| 10.88.13 ||

atra codāharantīmam itihāsaṁ purātanam

vṛkāsurāya giriśo varaṁ dattvāpa saṅkaṭam

TRANSLATION

In this connection, an ancient historical account is related concerning how the Lord of Kailāsa Mountain was put into danger by offering a choice of benedictions to the demon Vṛka.

|| 10.88.14 ||

vṛko nāmāsuraḥ putraḥ śakuneḥ pathi nāradam

dṛṣṭvāśu-toṣaṁ papraccha deveṣu triṣu durmatiḥ

TRANSLATION

The demon named Vṛka, a son of Śakuni's, once met Nārada on the road. The wicked fellow asked him which of the three chief gods could be pleased most quickly.

|| 10.88.15 ||

sa āha devaṁ giriśam upādhāvāśu siddhyasi

yo 'lpābhyāṁ guṇa-doṣābhyām āśu tuṣyati kupyati

TRANSLATION

Nārada told him: Worship Lord Śiva and you will soon achieve success. He quickly becomes pleased by seeing his worshiper's slightest good qualities—and quickly angered by seeing his slightest fault.

|| 10.88.16 ||

daśāsya-bāṇayos tuṣṭaḥ stuvator vandinor iva

aiśvaryam atulaṁ dattvā tata āpa su-saṅkaṭam

TRANSLATION

He became pleased with ten-headed Rāvaṇa, and also with Bāṇa, when they each chanted his glories, like bards in a royal court. Lord Śiva then bestowed unprecedented power upon each of them, but in both cases he was consequently beset with great difficulty.

COMMENTARY

Śiva encountered serious difficulty from Rāvaṇa's uprooting his residence on Kailāsa-parvata, and because of having to guard Bāṇāsura's capital.

|| 10.88.17 ||

ity ādiṣṭas tam asura upādhāvat sva-gātrataḥ

kedāra ātma-kravyeṇa juhvāno gni-mukhaṁ haram

TRANSLATION

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Thus advised, the demon proceeded to worship Lord Śiva at Kedāranātha by taking pieces of flesh from his own body and offering them as oblations into the sacred fire, which is Lord Śiva's mouth.

COMMENTARY

Vṛkāsura worshiped Śiva by cutting off pieces of his own flesh (*ātma-kravyeṇa*) and offering them to Lord Śiva.

|| 10.88.18-19 ||

devopalabdhim aprāpya nirvedāt saptame 'hani

śiro 'vṛścat sudhitinā tat-tīrtha-klinna-mūrdhajam

tadā mahā-kāruṇiko sa dhūrjaṭir yathā vayaṁ cāgnir ivotthito 'nalāt

nigṛhya dorbhyāṁ bhujayor nyavārayat tat-sparśanād bhūya upaskṛtākṛtiḥ

TRANSLATION

Vṛkāsura became frustrated after failing to obtain a vision of the lord. Finally, on the seventh day, after dipping his hair into the holy waters at Kedāranātha and leaving it wet, he took up a hatchet and prepared to cut off his head. But at that very moment the supremely merciful Lord Śiva rose up out of the sacrificial fire, looking like the god of fire himself, and grabbed both arms of the demon to stop him from killing himself, just as we would do. By Lord Śiva's touch, Vṛkāsura once again became whole.

COMMENTARY

Taking a hatchet (*sudhitinā*), the demon was about to cut off his head, which was wet with water from that holy place. Glowing brilliantly like fire, Śiva appeared and stopped him, just as we would prevent someone from killing himself due to grief. After restoring (*upaskṛtākṛtiḥ*) Vṛkāsura's body, Śiva spoke to the demon.

|| 10.88.20 ||

tam āha cāṅgālam alaṁ vṛṇīṣva me yathābhikāmaṁ vitarāmi te varam

prīyeya toyena nṛṇāṁ prapadyatām aho tvayātmā bhṛśam ardyate vṛthā

TRANSLATION

Lord Śiva said to him: My friend, please stop, stop! Ask from me whatever you want, and I will bestow that boon upon you. Alas, you have subjected your body to great torment for no reason, since I am pleased with a simple offering of water from those who approach me for shelter.

COMMENTARY

Lord Śiva said, "Enough, enough (*alaṁ alaṁ*) of this cutting off your head!"

|| 10.88.21 ||

devaṁ sa vavre pāpīyān varaṁ bhūta-bhayāvaham

yasya yasya karaṁ śīrṣṇi dhāsye sa mriyatām iti

TRANSLATION

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] The benediction sinful Vṛka chose from the lord would terrify all living beings. Vṛka said, "May death come to whomever I touch upon the head with my hand."

|| 10.88.22 ||

tac chrutvā bhagavān rudro durmanā iva bhārata

oṁ iti prahasaṁs tasmai dade 'her amṛtaṁ yathā

TRANSLATION

Upon hearing this, Lord Rudra seemed somewhat disturbed. Nonetheless, O descendant of Bharata, he vibrated oṁ to signify his assent, granting Vṛka the benediction with an ironic smile, as if giving milk to a poisonous snake.

|| 10.88.23 ||

sa tad-vara-parīkṣārthaṁ śambhor mūrdhni kilāsuraḥ

sva-hastaṁ dhātum ārebhe so 'bibhyat sva-kṛtāc chivaḥ

TRANSLATION

To test Lord Śambhu's benediction, the demon then tried to put his hand on the Lord's head. Thus Śiva was frightened because of what he himself had done.

COMMENTARY

Śiva became afraid (*abibhyat bhayaṁ prāpa*) of the benediction he himself had given (*sva-kṛtāc*). The word *abibhyat* is an alternative reading for *abibhyet,* and is justified by the poetic license of the sages.

|| 10.88.24 ||

tenopasṛṣṭaḥ santrastaḥ parādhāvan sa-vepathuḥ

yāvad antaṁ divo bhūmeḥ kaṣṭhānām udagād udak

TRANSLATION

As the demon pursued him, Lord Śiva fled swiftly from his abode in the north, shaking with terror. He ran as far as the limits of the earth, the sky and the corners of the universe.

COMMENTARY

Being chased by the demon, Śiva started running very quickly from his abode in the north (*udak*), and went to the limits of the directions in heaven and earth.

|| 10.88.25-26 ||

ajānantaḥ prati-vidhiṁ tūṣṇīm āsan sureśvarāḥ

tato vaikuṇṭham agamad bhāsvaraṁ tamasaḥ param

yatra nārāyaṇaḥ sākṣān nyāsināṁ paramo gatiḥ

śāntānāṁ nyasta-daṇḍānāṁ yato nāvartate gataḥ

TRANSLATION

The great demigods could only remain silent, not knowing how to counteract the benediction. Then Lord Śiva reached the luminous realm of Vaikuṇṭha, beyond all darkness, where the Supreme Lord Nārāyaṇa is manifest. That realm is the destination of renunciants who have attained peace and given up all violence against other creatures. Going there, one never returns.

COMMENTARY

Brahmā and other leaders of the demigods (*sureśvarāḥ*) could not find a remedy so they kept silent. Lord Śiva then went to Vaikuṇṭha, far beyond the darkness of the material world (*tamasaḥ param*).

|| 10.88.27-28 ||

taṁ tathā vyasanaṁ dṛṣṭvā bhagavān vṛjinārdanaḥ

dūrāt pratyudiyād bhūtvā baṭuko yoga-māyayā

mekhalājina-daṇḍākṣais tejasāgnir iva jvalan

abhivādayām āsa ca taṁ kuśa-pāṇir vinīta-vat

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord, who relieves His devotees' distress, had seen from afar that Lord Śiva was in danger. Thus by His mystic Yogamāyā potency He assumed the form of a brahmacārī student, with the appropriate belt, deerskin, rod and prayer beads, and came before Vṛkāsura. The Lord's effulgence glowed brilliantly like fire. Holding kuśa grass in His hand, He humbly greeted the demon.

COMMENTARY

Viṣṇu, assuming the dress of a brahmacārī, came before (*pratyudiyāt*) Vṛkāsura. Viṣṇu greeted him by offering blessings and paying His respects.

The phrase *abhivādayām āsa*, "He respectfully greeted" can also mean the disguised Lord Nārāyana said, "For Us seers of the Absolute Truth, all created beings are worthy of respect. Since you are the son of Śakuni, a wise man and performer of great austerities, you certainly deserve the respectful greeting of a young *brahmacārī* like Myself."

|| 10.88.29 ||

taṁ tathā vyasanaṁ dṛṣṭvā bhagavān vṛjinārdanaḥ

dūrāt pratyudiyād bhūtvā baṭuko yoga-māyayā

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TRANSLATION

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COMMENTARY

Lord Nārāyaṇa said, "This body (*ātma*) fulfills all of our desires (*sarva-kāma-dhuk*). Therefore do not torment it by the fatigue of running excessively."

|| 10.88.30 ||

yadi naḥ śravaṇāyālaṁ yuṣmad-vyavasitaṁ vibho

bhaṇyatāṁ prāyaśaḥ pumbhir dhṛtaiḥ svārthān samīhate

TRANSLATION

O mighty one, please tell Us what you intend to do, if We are qualified to hear it. Usually one accomplishes his purposes by taking help from others.

COMMENTARY

Lord Nārāyaṇa continued, "One's work becomes successful by the help of others (*pumbhir dhṛtaiḥ*). Therefore you should tell Me your intention, so that I can assist you with the strength of My *brahma-tejas* (*brahminical* potency)."

|| 10.88.31 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

evaṁ bhagavatā pṛṣṭo vacasāmṛta-varṣiṇā

gata-klamo 'bravīt tasmai yathā-pūrvam anuṣṭhitam

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus questioned by the Personality of Godhead in language that poured down upon him like sweet nectar, Vṛka felt relieved of his fatigue. He described to the Lord everything he had done.

|| 10.88.32 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

evaṁ cet tarhi tad-vākyaṁ na vayaṁ śraddadhīmahi

yo dakṣa-śāpāt paiśācyaṁ prāptaḥ preta-piśāca-rāṭ

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord said: If this is the case, We cannot believe what Śiva says. Śiva is the same lord of the Pretas and Piśācas whom Dakṣa cursed to become like a carnivorous hobgoblin.

|| 10.88.33 ||

yadi vas tatra viśrambho dānavendra jagad-gurau

tarhy aṅgāśu sva-śirasi hastaṁ nyasya pratīyatām

TRANSLATION

O best of the demons, if you have any faith in him because he is the spiritual master of the universe, then without delay put your hand on your head and see what happens.

|| 10.88.34 ||

yady asatyaṁ vacaḥ śambhoḥ kathañcid dānavarṣabha

tadainaṁ jahy asad-vācaṁ na yad vaktānṛtaṁ punaḥ

TRANSLATION

If the words of Lord Śambhu prove untrue in any way, O best of the demons, then kill the liar so he may never lie again.

COMMENTARY

Lord Nārāyaṇa said, “Though Lord Śiva may have the mystic power to revive himself even after being killed, you should kill him, so at least he will be dissuaded from lying again.”

|| 10.88.35 ||

itthaṁ bhagavataś citrair vacobhiḥ sa su-peśalaiḥ

bhinna-dhīr vismṛtaḥ śīrṣṇi sva-hastaṁ kumatir nyadhāt

TRANSLATION

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Thus bewildered by the Personality of Godhead’s enchanting, artful words, foolish Vṛka, without realizing what he was doing, placed his hand on his head.

COMMENTARY

Forgetting about (*vismṛtiḥ*) Śiva’s benediction, the demon touched his own head.

|| 10.88.36 ||

athāpatad bhinna-śirāḥ vajrāhata iva kṣaṇāt

jaya-śabdo namaḥ-śabdaḥ sādhu-śabdo ’bhavad divi

TRANSLATION

Instantly his head shattered as if struck by a lightning bolt, and the demon fell down dead. From the sky were heard cries of “Victory!” “Obeisances!” and “Well done!”

|| 10.88.37 ||

mumucuḥ puṣpa-varṣāṇi hate pāpe vṛkāsure

devarṣi-pitṛ-gandharvā mocitaḥ saṅkaṭāc chivaḥ

TRANSLATION

The celestial sages, Pitās and Gandharvas rained down flowers to celebrate the killing of sinful Vṛkāsura. Now Lord Śiva was out of danger.

|| 10.88.38-39 ||

muktaṁ giriśam abhyāha bhagavān puruṣottamaḥ

aho deva mahā-deva pāpo 'yaṁ svena pāpmanā

hataḥ ko nu mahatsv īśa jantur vai kṛta-kilbiṣaḥ

kṣemī syāt kim u viśveśe kṛtāgasko jagad-gurau

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Personality of Godhead then addressed Lord Giriśa, who was now out of danger: "Just see, O Mahādeva, My lord, how this wicked man has been killed by his own sinful reactions. Indeed, what living being can hope for good fortune if he offends exalted saints, what to speak of offending the lord and spiritual master of the universe?"

COMMENTARY

This statement of Lord Viṣṇu's implies a mild scolding: "My dear possessor of unlimited vision, O you of clear intelligence, benedictions should not be given to wicked demons in this way. You could have been killed! But you were only concerned about saving this poor soul, so you disregarded what would happen to you as a result." By this mild rebuke, Lord Nārāyaṇa is also highlighting the exceptional compassion of the powerful Lord Śiva.

|| 10.88.40 ||

ya evam avyākṛta-śakty-udanvataḥ parasya sākṣāt paramātmano hareḥ

giritra-mokṣaṁ kathayec chṛṇoti vā vimucyate saṁsṛtibhis tathāribhiḥ

TRANSLATION

Lord Hari is the directly manifest Absolute Truth, the Supreme Soul and unlimited ocean of inconceivable energies. Anyone who recites or hears this pastime of His saving Lord Śiva will be freed from all enemies and the repetition of birth and death.

COMMENTARY

He who hears or tells the story of Śiva's deliverance by Hari, the unlimited ocean (*udanvataḥ*) of inconceivable (*avyākṛta*) energies, will be freed from enemies and the repetition of birth and death.

Thus ends the commentary on the Eighty-eighth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna Retrieve a Brāhmaṇa's Sons

|| 10.89.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

sarasvatyās taṭe rājann ṛṣayaḥ satram āsata

vitarkaḥ samabhūt teṣāṁ triṣv adhīśeṣu ko mahān

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Once, O King, as a group of sages were performing a Vedic sacrifice on the banks of the Sarasvatī River, a controversy arose among them as to which of the three chief deities is supreme.

COMMENTARY

In this chapter, the supremacy of Viṣṇu over Brahmā and Śiva is shown through a test by Bhṛgu Muni. The superiority of Śrī Kṛṣṇa even above Lord Viṣṇu is shown by Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu's stealing a *brāhmaṇa's* sons. Beginning with the words *sarasvatyās taṭe rājann*, another story is told to demonstrate that Lord Viṣṇu alone should be served because He is Supreme above all.

|| 10.89.2 ||

tasya jijñāsayā te vai bhṛguṁ brahma-sutaṁ nṛpa

taj-jñaptyai preṣayām āsuḥ so 'bhjagād brahmaṇaḥ sabhām

TRANSLATION

Eager to resolve this question, O King, the sages sent Lord Brahmā's son Bhṛgu to find the answer. First he went to his father's court.

COMMENTARY

The sages sent Bhṛgu to the court of Brahmā in order to find an answer (*taj jñanaya*).

|| 10.89.3 ||

na tasmai prahvaṇaṁ stotraṁ cakre sattva-parīkṣayā

tasmai cukrodha bhagavān prajvalan svena tejasā

TRANSLATION

To test how well Lord Brahmā was situated in the mode of goodness, Bhṛgu failed to bow down to him or glorify him with prayers. The lord became angry at him, inflamed into fury by his own passion.

COMMENTARY

Bhṛgu did not bow down (*prahvaṇaṁ*) in order to test Brahmā's quality of sattva-guṇa or his greatness (*sattva-parīkṣayā*).

|| 10.89.4 ||

sa ātmany utthitam manyum ātmajāyātmanā prabhuḥ

aśīśamad yathā vahniṁ sva-yonyā vāriṇātma-bhūḥ

TRANSLATION

Though anger toward his son was now rising within his heart, Lord Brahmā was able to subdue it by applying his intelligence, in the same way that fire is extinguished by its own product, water.

COMMENTARY

Out of anger, Brahmā intended to kill his son Bhṛgu. As fire is subdued by that which has fire itself as its cause of generation (*sva-yonyā:utpatti-kāraṇam*), namely water, similarly, Brahmā subdued his anger by his own expansion (his son).

Or, just as fire is extinguished by its cause water (*yonya:kāraṇena*), so Brahmā extinguished his anger by its cause, the mind (*ātmanā*). Since we see Agni-deva (the

god of fire) is called Āsu-yoni (born from air) and Kapīṭa-yoni (born from wood), it is a well-known fact that sometimes fire is generated from water.

|| 10.89.5 ||

tataḥ kailāsam agamat sa taṁ devo maheśvaraḥ

parirabdhuṁ samārebha utthāya bhrātaraṁ mudā

TRANSLATION

Bhṛgu then went to Mount Kailāsa. There Lord Śiva stood up and happily came forward to embrace his brother.

|| 10.89.6-7 ||

naicchat tvam asy utpatha-ga iti devaś cukopa ha

śūlam udyamya taṁ hantum ārebhe tigma-locanaḥ

patitvā pādayor devī sāntvayām āsa taṁ girā

atho jagāma vaikuṇṭhaṁ yatra devo janārdanaḥ

TRANSLATION

But Bhṛgu refused his embrace, telling him, "You are a deviant heretic." At this Lord Śiva became angry, and his eyes burned ferociously. He raised his trident and was about to kill Bhṛgu when Goddess Devī fell at his feet and spoke some words to pacify him. Bhṛgu then left that place and went to Vaikuṇṭha, where Lord Janārdana resides.

COMMENTARY

Upon testing Brahmā by committing a mental offense to him, Bhṛgu understood that Brahmā could not overcome the mode of passion. Bhṛgu then went to the superior Śiva and committed a more serious offense by verbally insulting him. This is described in two verses.

Bhṛgu saw the mode of ignorance in Śiva, and the mode of goodness in his expansion Pārvatī. By testing Śiva, Bhṛgu understood that he could not overcome his ignorance. Then Bhṛgu left Mount Kailāsa and went to Vaikuṇṭha (Śvetadvīpa), where he committed an even greater offense, namely a bodily offense against Lord Viṣṇu, the best person.

|| 10.89.8-9 ||

śayānaṁ śriya utsaṅge padā vakṣasy atāḍayat

tata utthāya bhagavān saha lakṣmyā satāṁ gatiḥ

sva-talpād avaruhyātha nanāma śirasā munim

āha te svāgataṁ brahman niṣīdātrāsane kṣaṇam

ajānatām āgatān vaḥ kṣantum arhatha naḥ prabho

TRANSLATION

There he went up to the Supreme Lord, who was lying with His head on the lap of His consort, Śrī, and kicked Him on the chest. The Lord then rose, along with Goddess Lakṣmī, as a sign of respect. Coming down from His bedstead, that supreme goal of all pure devotees bowed His head to the floor before the sage and told him, 'Welcome, brāhmaṇa. Please sit in this chair and rest awhile. Kindly forgive us, dear master, for not noticing your arrival'.

COMMENTARY

Not only did Bhṛgu commit an offense to the Lord, but he did it while Viṣṇu was lying on a flower bed with His head in His wife's lap. For Bhṛgu to strike Lord Viṣṇu in this position—and not with his hand but with his foot—was worse than any other offense Bhṛgu could have imagined. Bhṛgu did this in order to see if Viṣṇu was in the mode of goodness. However, he saw Viṣṇu display not even ordinary goodness but rather *suddha-sattva*, transcendental goodness. This is explained in four verses.

The phrase *bhagavān saha lakṣmyā*, "Together with the goddess of fortune" implies that even though this offense happened when Viṣṇu was with His consort Lakṣmī, moreover in the seclusion of her private quarters, and moreover with the possibility that Bhṛgu could have seen Lakṣmī-devī's limbs, yet nonetheless she did not have even a trace of anger against the sage; this is a function of the mode of goodness. Because Lakṣmi understood the mentality of her beloved consort, she did not feel angry within herself even when she saw Viṣṇu being insulted; this is a function of transcendental goodness. The phrase *satāṁ gatiḥ* indicates that even the associates of Viṣṇu who reside in Vaikuṇṭha have the same nature. "I will not accept this seat from You since You failed to honor me by standing up and coming forward to greet me." In response to such an anticipated statement from the sage Bhṛgu, Viṣṇu says, "I have committed an offense to you. Your mercy is My only shelter, so kindly forgive Us for not noticing your arrival."

|| 10.89.10-11 ||

punīhi saha-lokaṁ māṁ loka-pālāṁś ca mad-gatān

pādodakena bhavatas tīrthānāṁ tīrtha-kāriṇā

adyāhaṁ bhagavaû lakṣmyā āsam ekānta-bhājanam

vatsyaty urasi me bhūtir bhavat-pāda-hatāṁhasaḥ

TRANSLATION

“Please purify Me, My realm and the realms of the universal rulers devoted to Me by giving us the water that has washed your feet. This holy water is indeed what makes all places of pilgrimage sacred. Today, my lord, I have become the exclusive shelter of the goddess of fortune, Lakṣmī; she will consent to reside on My chest because your foot has rid it of sins.”

COMMENTARY

Lord Viṣṇu said, “If you have forgiven this grave offense, then please purify Us with the water that has washed your feet. This holy water is indeed what turns rivers like the Gaṇgā into places of pilgrimage (*tīrtha-kāriṇā*)”

Viṣṇu’s forgiveness for even so severe an offense committed by Bhṛgu is a sign of *sattva-guna*. On the other hand, Viṣṇu’s thinking Himself an offender and His pacifying Bhṛgu is a sign of *suddha-sattva*, transcendental goodness. Responding to this, Bhṛgu said, “But for giving pain to You and Your beloved consort, Lakṣmī, I will have to live in hell for a whole day of Brahmā. I am such a fallen sinful *ƀrāhmaṇa* that I put my filthy foot on Your chest.”

Replying to Bhṛgu’s words of remorse, Lord Viṣṇu said, “O dear sage, O ocean of mercy, you have actually made Us both most happy today (*adyāhaṁ*).”

|| 10.89.12 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

evaṁ bruvāṇe vaikuṇṭhe bhṛgus tan-mandrayā girā

nirvṛtas tarpitas tūṣṇīṁ bhakty-utkaṇṭho ’śru-locanaḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Bhṛgu felt satisfied and delighted to hear the solemn words spoken by Lord Vaikuṇṭha. Overwhelmed with devotional ecstasy, he remained silent, his eyes brimming with tears.

COMMENTARY

Pleased by the Lord's solemn (*mandrayā*) words, Bhṛgu remained silent, unable to recite praises as his throat was choked up with tears. Thus, according to the opinion of ancient authorities, Bhṛgu did not commit an offense, since he was like a puppet being made to dance on the stage of the Lord's transcendental pleasure pastimes by the puppeteer named Viṣṇu.

|| 10.89.13 ||

punaś ca satram āvrajya munīnāṁ brahmā-vādinām

svānubhūtam aśeṣeṇa rājan bhṛgur avarṇayat

TRANSLATION

O King, Bhṛgu then returned to the sacrificial arena of the wise Vedic authorities and described his entire experience to them.

|| 10.89.14-17 ||

tan niśamyātha munayo vismitā mukta-saṁśayāḥ

bhūyāṁsaṁ śraddadhur viṣṇuṁ yataḥ śāntir yato 'bhayam

dharmaḥ sākṣād yato jñānaṁ vairāgyaṁ ca tad-anvitam

aiśvaryaṁ cāṣṭadhā yasmād yaśaś cātma-malāpaham

munīnāṁ nyasta-daṇḍānāṁ śāntānāṁ sama-cetasām

akiñcanānāṁ sādhūnāṁ yam āhuḥ paramāṁ gatim

sattvaṁ yasya priyā mūrtir brāhmaṇās tv iṣṭa-devatāḥ

bhajanty anāśiṣaḥ śāntā yaṁ vā nipuṇa-buddhayaḥ

TRANSLATION

Amazed upon hearing Bhṛgu's account, the sages were freed from all doubts and became convinced that Viṣṇu is the greatest Lord. From Him come peace; fearlessness; the essential principles of religion; detachment with knowledge; the eightfold powers of mystic yoga; and His glorification, which cleanses the mind of all impurities. He is known as the supreme destination for those who are peaceful and equipoised—the selfless, wise saints who have given up all violence. His most dear form is that of pure goodness, and the brāhmaṇas are His worshipable deities. Persons of keen intellect who have attained spiritual peace worship Him without selfish motives.

COMMENTARY

(Text 15) The sages understood Viṣṇu the supreme, from whom comes the direct manifestation (*sākṣād*) of *dharma*, characterized by hearing, chanting and other activities; knowledge (*jñānam*) or realization of the Personality of Godhead; and along with that (*tad-anvitam*), detachment. The word *sākṣād* should be understood to accompany all the items in this list.

That by *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* one easily attains transcendental knowledge and detachment is stated in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (11.2.42):

bhaktiḥ pareśānubhavo viraktir

anyatra caiṣa trika eka-kālaḥ

prapadyamānasya yathāśnataḥ syus

tuṣṭiḥ puṣṭiḥ kṣud-apāyo ’nu-ghāsam

> “Devotion, direct experience of the Supreme Lord, and detach-ment from other things—these three occur, simultaneously for one who has taken shelter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, in the same way that pleasure, nourishment and relief from hunger come simultaneously and increasingly, with each bite, for a person engaged in eating.”

This verse shows that devotion, realization of the Lord and renunciation appear simultaneously. There is an alternative reading of *catur-vidham* for *tad-anvitam*. Then the idea is that this is not dry renunciation, but rather renunciation of the four ordinary goals of human endeavor (*artha, dharma, kāma* and *mokṣa*).

In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (SB 3.25.37) Kapila Muni says the eightfold mystic powers (*aiśvaryaṁ cāṣṭadhā*) of *yoga* are also coincidental fruits of devotional service:

atho vibhūtiṁ mama māyāvinas tām

aiśvaryam aṣṭāṅgam anupravṛttam

śrīyaṁ bhāgavatīṁ vāspṛhayanti bhadrāṁ

parasya me te ’śnuvate hi loke

> “Because he is completely absorbed in thought of Me, My devotee does not desire even the highest benediction obtainable in the upper planetary systems, including

Satyaloka. He does not desire the eight material perfections obtained from mystic *yoga*, nor does he desire to be elevated to the kingdom of God. Yet even without desiring them, My devotee enjoys, even in this life, all the offered benedictions."

Also from Viṣṇu comes fame (*yaśas*), which destroys all contamination in the mind (*ātma-malāpaham*) of the hearer.

(Text 16) This verse names three kinds of transcendentalists: the *munis*, the *śāntas* and the *sādhus*. The scriptures say that Viṣṇu is the shelter of those striving for liberation (*munīnāṁ*), those who have attained liberation (*śāntānāṁ*), and those who are serving the Lord in devotion (*sādhūnāṁ*).

(Text 17) Though Viṣṇu is transcendental to the three modes of nature, He is affectionate to those in the mode of goodness (*sattvaṁ priyā mūrtir*). Among them, He is even more affectionate to the *brāhmaṇas*, whom He honors as His own worshipable deities. Indeed, even the desireless saints (*anāśiṣaḥ*), the peaceful sages (*śāntāḥ*) and the intellectuals (*nipuṇa-buddhayaḥ*) worship Viṣṇu alone (*yaṁ vā*).

|| 10.89.18 ||

tri-vidhākṛtayas tasya rākṣasā asurāḥ surāḥ

guṇinyā māyayā sṛṣṭāḥ sattvaṁ tat tīrtha-sādhanam

TRANSLATION

The Lord expands into three kinds of manifest beings—the Rākṣasas, the demons and the demigods—all of whom are created by the Lord's material energy and conditioned by her modes. But among these three modes, it is the mode of goodness which is the means of attaining life's final success.

COMMENTARY

"But Viṣṇu is beyond the *guṇas* (*nirguṇa*), so how then can He be affectionate to someone in the *guṇas*? He should be indifferent to everything concerning the *guṇas*."

This objection is answered in this verse. "Although the Lord expands into three kinds of manifest beings conditioned by the modes of nature, the mode of goodness, according to Śrīla Śrīdhara Swāmī, is the means of attaining the goal of life (*tīrtha-sādhanam*)." From the point of view of benefiting the *jīvas, sattva-guna* appears to be dearer to the merciful, sustaining Lord, though actually it is not. In reality, Viṣṇu is indifferent to all the *guṇas*, modes of nature.

|| 10.89.19 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

itthaṁ sārasvatā viprā nṛṇām saṁśaya-nuttaye

puruṣasya padāmbhoja- sevayā tad-gatiṁ gatāḥ

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: The learned brāhmaṇas living along the river Sarasvatī came to this conclusion in order to dispel the doubts of all people. Thereafter they rendered devotional service to the Supreme Lord's lotus feet and attained His abode.

COMMENTARY

Thus engaged in dispelling (*nuttaye*) the doubts of men, the sages attained liberation.

|| 10.89.20 ||

śrī-sūta uvāca

ity etan muni-tanayāsya-padma-gandha

pīyūṣaṁ bhava-bhaya-bhit parasya puṁsaḥ

su-ślokaṁ śravaṇa-puṭaiḥ pibaty abhīkṣṇam

pāntho 'dhva-bhramaṇa-pariśramaṁ jahāti

TRANSLATION

Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī said: Thus did this fragrant nectar flow from the lotus mouth of Śukadeva Gosvāmī, the son of the sage Vyāsadeva. This wonderful glorification of the Supreme Person destroys all fear of material existence. A traveler who constantly drinks this nectar through his ear-holes will forget the fatigue brought on by wandering along the paths of worldly life.

COMMENTARY

The phrase *padma-gandha pīyūṣaṁ* "nectar with the aroma of lotuses" implies that, since this narration is nectarean, it is an effective tonic to cure the disease of illusion, and since it has the fragrance of a lotus, it attracts the beelike devotees.

|| 10.89.21 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

ekadā dvāravatyāṁ tu vipra-patnyāḥ kumārakaḥ

jāta-mātro bhuvaṁ spṛṣṭvā mamāra kila bhārata

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Once, in Dvārakā, a brāhmaṇa's wife gave birth to a son, but the newborn infant died as soon as he touched the ground, O Bhārata.

COMMENTARY

In this chapter, Lord Viṣṇu has been glorified as the Supreme Godhead. Now Śukadeva Gosvāmī relates one story to highlight Śrī Kṛṣṇa's unequaled position as the topmost among all the forms of Godhead.

|| 10.89.22 ||

vipro gṛhītvā mṛtakaṁ rāja-dvāry upadhāya saḥ

idaṁ provāca vilapann āturo dīna-mānasaḥ

TRANSLATION

The brāhmaṇa took the corpse and placed it at the door of King Ugrasena's court. Then, agitated and lamenting miserably, he spoke the following.

|| 10.89.23 ||

brahma-dviṣaḥ śaṭha-dhiyo lubdhasya viṣayātmanaḥ

kṣatra-bandhoḥ karma-doṣāt pañcatvaṁ me gato 'rbhakaḥ

TRANSLATION

[The brāhmaṇa said:] This duplicitous, greedy enemy of brāhmaṇas, this unqualified ruler addicted to sense pleasure, has caused my son's death by some discrepancies in the execution of his duties.

COMMENTARY

The *brāhmaṇa* said, "I have no fault. Therefore, it is the king's fault that my sons have died."

|| 10.89.24 ||

hiṁsā-vihāraṁ nṛpatiṁ duḥśīlam ajitendriyam

prajā bhajantyaḥ sīdanti daridrā nitya-duḥkhitāḥ

TRANSLATION

Citizens serving such a wicked king, who takes pleasure in violence and cannot control his senses, are doomed to suffer poverty and constant misery.

|| 10.89.25 ||

evaṁ dvitīyaṁ viprarṣis tṛtīyaṁ tv evam eva ca

visṛjya sa nṛpa-dvāri tāṁ gāthāṁ samagāyata

TRANSLATION

The wise brāhmaṇa suffered the same tragedy with his second and third child. Each time, he left the body of his dead son at the King's door and sang the same song of lamentation.

COMMENTARY

The brāhmaṇa loudly declared such words (*tāṁ gāthāṁ*) as "You are a hater of *brāhmaṇas*" (*brahma-dviṣaḥ*) when his second and third sons died.

|| 10.89.26-27 ||

tām arjuna upaśrutya karhicit keśavāntike

parete navame bāle brāhmaṇaṁ samabhāṣata

kiṁ svid brahmaṁs tvan-nivāse iha nāsti dhanur-dharaḥ

rājanya-bandhur ete vai brāhmaṇāḥ satram āsate

TRANSLATION

When the ninth child died, Arjuna, who was near Lord Keśava, happened to overhear the brāhmaṇa lamenting. Thus Arjuna addressed the brāhmaṇa: "What is the matter, my dear brāhmaṇa? Isn't there some lowly member of the royal order here who can at least stand before your house with a bow in his hand? These kṣatriyas are behaving as if they were brāhmaṇas idly engaged in fire sacrifices.

COMMENTARY

"There isn't even a low-grade warrior (*rājanya-bandhur*) here, what to speak of one who is devoted to the *brāhmaṇas*." Thus speaking arrogantly, Arjuna glanced around at the people standing there.

“But tell me, what can members of the royal order do in this dire situation?”

Pointing accusingly with his index finger, Arjuna answered sarcastically, “The *kṣatriyas* here are behaving as if they were *brāhmaṇas* idly engaged in fire sacrifices. What will happen to those they are supposed to protect? Therefore, the *kṣatriyas* sitting in this court deserve to be killed.”

|| 10.89.28 ||

dhana-dārātmajāpṛktā yatra śocanti brāhmaṇāḥ

te vai rājanya-veṣeṇa naṭā jīvanty asum-bharāḥ

TRANSLATION

“The rulers of a kingdom in which brāhmaṇas lament over lost wealth, wives and children are merely imposters playing the role of kings just to earn their livelihood.

COMMENTARY

Arjuna continued, “Hear the proof of how unqualified are the *kṣatriyas* present here. Where *brāhmaṇas* lament the loss of their wealth, wives or children, the *kṣatriyas* living there are merely imposters posing as rulers.”

|| 10.89.29 ||

ahaṁ prajāḥ vāṁ bhagavan rakṣiṣye dīnayor iha

anistīrṇa-pratijño ’gniṁ pravekṣye hata-kalmaṣaḥ

TRANSLATION

“My lord, I will protect the progeny of you and your wife, who are in such distress. And if I fail to keep this promise, I will enter fire to atone for my sin.”

COMMENTARY

Arjuna addresses the husband and wife (*vām*). Though the wife was present she was silent because of her grief.

Arjuna said, “If I break my promise (*anistīrna-pratijño*), then I will enter the fire, and thereby become free of the sin (*hata-kalmaṣaḥ*) for having broken my promise.”

|| 10.89.30-31 ||

śrī-brāhmaṇa uvāca

saṅkarṣaṇo vāsudevaḥ pradyumno dhanvināṁ varaḥ

aniruddho 'prati-ratho na trātuṁ śaknuvanti yat

tat kathaṁ nu bhavān karma duṣkaraṁ jagad-īśvaraiḥ

tvaṁ cikīrṣasi bāliśyāt tan na śraddadhmahe vayam

TRANSLATION

The brāhmaṇa said: Neither Saṅkarṣaṇa; Vāsudeva; Pradyumna, the best of bowmen; nor the unequaled warrior Aniruddha could save my sons. Then why do you naively attempt a feat that the almighty Lords of the universe could not perform? We cannot take you seriously.

COMMENTARY

The *brāhmana* said, "We do not believe this (*na śraddadhmahe:na viśvasimaḥ*)."

|| 10.89.32 ||

śrī-arjuna uvāca

nāhaṁ saṅkarṣaṇo brahman na kṛṣṇaḥ kārṣṇir eva ca

ahaṁ vā arjuno nāma gāṇḍīvaṁ yasya vai dhanuḥ

TRANSLATION

Śrī Arjuna said: I am neither Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa, O brāhmaṇa, nor Lord Kṛṣṇa, nor even Kṛṣṇa's son. Rather, I am Arjuna, wielder of the Gāṇḍīva bow.

COMMENTARY

While saying, "I am the wielder of the Gāṇḍīva bow," Arjuna showed his bow.

|| 10.89.33 ||

māvamaṁsthā mama brahman vīryaṁ tryambaka-toṣaṇam

mṛtyuṁ vijitya prādhāne āneṣye te prajāḥ prabho

TRANSLATION

Do not minimize my ability, which was good enough to satisfy Lord Śiva, O brāhmaṇa. I will bring back your sons, dear master, even if I have to defeat Death himself in battle.

|| 10.89.34 ||

evaṁ viśrambhito vipraḥ phālgunena parantapa

jagāma sva-gṛhaṁ prītaḥ pārtha-vīryaṁ niśāmayan

TRANSLATION

Thus convinced by Arjuna, O tormentor of enemies, the brāhmaṇa went home, satisfied by having heard Arjuna's declaration of his prowess.

|| 10.89.35 ||

prasūti-kāla āsanne bhāryāyā dvija-sattamaḥ

pāhi pāhi prajāṁ mṛtyor ity āhārjunam āturaḥ

TRANSLATION

When the wife of the elevated brāhmaṇa was again about to give birth, he went to Arjuna in great anxiety and begged him, "Please, please protect my child from death!"

COMMENTARY

Arjuna resided for one year in Dvārakā waiting for the birth. Or else Arjuna returned to Dvārakā upon learning of the approaching birth. When the *brāhmaṇa's* wife ordered, "Bring Arjuna," the *brāhmaṇa* came in the night and spoke this verse to Arjuna.

|| 10.89.36 ||

sa upaspṛśya śucy ambho namaskṛtya maheśvaram

divyāny astrāṇi saṁsmṛtya sajyaṁ gāṇḍīvam ādade

TRANSLATION

After touching pure water, offering obeisances to Lord Maheśvara and recollecting the mantras for his celestial weapons, Arjuna strung his bow Gāṇḍīva.

COMMENTARY

Since the *brāhmaṇa* had disrespected Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna, due to his feelings of friendship for Kṛṣṇa, tactfully offered his obeisances instead to Lord Śiva.

|| 10.89.37 ||

nyaruṇat sūtikāgāraṁ śarair nānāstra-yojitaiḥ

tiryag ūrdhvam adhaḥ pārthaś cakāra śara-pañjaram

TRANSLATION

Arjuna fenced in the house where the birth was taking place by shooting arrows attached to various missiles. Thus the son of Pṛthā constructed a protective cage of arrows, covering the house upwards, downwards and sideways.

|| 10.89.38 ||

tataḥ kumāraḥ sañjāto vipra-patnyā rudan muhuḥ

sadyo 'darśanam āpede sa-śarīro vihāyasā

TRANSLATION

The brāhmaṇa's wife then gave birth, but after the newborn infant had been crying for a short time, he suddenly vanished into the sky in his selfsame body.

COMMENTARY

The phrase *āpede sa-śarīro* "his body disappeared" shows that without Kṛṣṇa desiring it, neither the celestial weapons of Arjuna nor the blessings of Lord Śiva could protect the infant's body.

|| 10.89.39 ||

tadāha vipro vijayaṁ vinindan kṛṣṇa-sannidhau

mauḍhyaṁ paśyata me yo 'haṁ śraddadhe klība-katthanam

TRANSLATION

The brāhmaṇa then derided Arjuna in front of Lord Kṛṣṇa: "Just see how foolish I was to put my faith in the bragging of a eunuch!"

COMMENTARY

The *brāhmaṇa* criticized Arjuna in front of Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa-sannidhau*), because he would not be able to relish the same pleasure by criticizing him in the privacy of his own home.

|| 10.89.40 ||

na pradyumno nāniruddho na rāmo na ca keśavaḥ

yasya śekuḥ paritrātuṁ ko 'nyas tad-aviteśvaraḥ

TRANSLATION

"When neither Pradyumna, Aniruddha, Rāma nor Keśava can save a person, who else can possibly protect him?"

COMMENTARY

The *brāhmaṇa* said, "Who can possibly protect he whom (*yasya*) Pradyumna, Aniruddha, Balarāma nor Kṛṣṇa failed to protect?"

|| 10.89.41 ||

dhig arjunaṁ mṛṣā-vādaṁ dhig ātma-ślāghino dhanuḥ

daivopasṛṣṭaṁ yo mauḍhyād āninīṣati durmatiḥ

TRANSLATION

"To hell with that liar Arjuna! To hell with that braggart's bow! He is so foolish that he has deluded himself into thinking he can bring back a person whom destiny has taken away."

|| 10.89.42 ||

evaṁ śapati viprarṣau vidyām āsthāya phālgunaḥ

yayau saṁyamanīm āśu yatrāste bhagavān yamaḥ

TRANSLATION

While the wise brāhmaṇa continued to heap insults upon him, Arjuna employed a mystic incantation to go at once to Saṁyamanī, the city of heaven where Lord Yamarāja resides.

|| 10.89.43-44 ||

viprāpatyam acakṣāṇas tata aindrīm agāt purīm

āgneyīṁ nairṛtīṁ saumyāṁ vāyavyāṁ vāruṇīm atha

rasātalaṁ nāka-pṛṣṭhaṁ dhiṣṇyāny anyāny udāyudhaḥ

tato 'labdha-dvija-suto hy anistīrṇa-pratiśrutaḥ

agniṁ vivikṣuḥ kṛṣṇena pratyuktaḥ pratiṣedhatā

TRANSLATION

Not seeing the brāhmaṇa's child there, Arjuna went to the cities of Agni, Nirṛti, Soma, Vāyu and Varuṇa. With weapons at the ready he searched through all the domains of the universe, from the bottom of the subterranean region to the roof of heaven. Finally, not having found the brāhmaṇa's son anywhere, Arjuna decided to enter the sacred fire, having failed to keep his promise. But just as he was about to do so, Lord Kṛṣṇa stopped him and spoke the following words.

COMMENTARY

Arjuna went in all directions starting with Yamaloka in the south. He went north (*saumyāṁ*) to the moon planet; northwest, (vayavya), south east (*āgneya*), south west (*nairṛtya*), east (*aindri*), and west (*vāruṇī*). Because Arjuna trusted Lord Śiva implicitly as his *guru*, he did not bother to search the northeast, which is the celestial abode (*anyānyam*) of Lord Śiva.

(Test 44) Arjuna was prevented (*pratyuktaḥ*) from entering fire by Kṛṣṇa who stopped him (*pratiṣedhatā*).

|| 10.89.45 ||

darśaye dvija-sūnūṁs te māvajñātmānam ātmanā

ye te naḥ kīrtiṁ vimalāṁ manuṣyāḥ sthāpayiṣyanti

TRANSLATION

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] I will show you the brāhmaṇa's sons, so please don't despise yourself like this. These same men who now criticize us will soon establish our spotless fame.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa said, "Arjuna, do not belittle (*māvajña*) yourself like that."

Arjuna replied, "Do not stop me. Otherwise, people will criticize me as a *kṣatriya*."

Kṛṣṇa: "The same ones who are criticizing will establish our fame."

Or alternately, "Even those who criticize will establish our glory." There is another version *yeneha kīrtiṁ vimalāṁ*, but according to Śrīdhara Swāmī this is an interpolation brought about to preserve the correct meter.

|| 10.89.46 ||

iti sambhāṣya bhagavān arjunena saheśvaraḥ

divyaṁ sva-ratham āsthāya pratīcīṁ diśam āviśat

TRANSLATION

Having thus advised Arjuna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead had Arjuna join Him on His divine chariot, and together they set off toward the west.

|| 10.89.47 ||

sapta dvīpān sa-sindhūṁś ca sapta sapta girīn atha

lokālokaṁ tathātītya viveśa su-mahat tamaḥ

TRANSLATION

The Lord's chariot passed over the seven islands of the middle universe, each with its ocean and its seven principal mountains. Then it crossed the Lokāloka boundary and entered the vast region of total darkness.

|| 10.89.48-49 ||

tatrāśvāḥ śaibya-sugrīva-meghapuṣpa-balāhakāḥ

tamasi bhraṣṭa-gatayo babhūvur bharatarṣabha

tān dṛṣṭvā bhagavān kṛṣṇo mahā-yogeśvareśvaraḥ

sahasrāditya-saṅkāśaṁ sva-cakraṁ prāhiṇot puraḥ

TRANSLATION

In that darkness the chariot's horses—Śaibya, Sugrīva, Meghapuṣpa and Balāhaka—lost their way. Seeing them in this condition, O best of the Bhāratas, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the supreme master of all masters of yoga, sent His Sudarśana disc before the chariot. That disc shone like thousands of suns.

COMMENTARY

By the phrase *tamasi bhraṣṭa-gatayo*, "the horses lost their way in the darkness," we should understand the following: Kṛṣṇa's transcendental horses had descended from Vaikuṇṭha to participate in His earthly pastimes. Since Śrī Kṛṣṇa was pretending to be a finite human being, His steeds now acted confused to astonish Arjuna, and to enhance the drama of the situation for all who would one day hear this pastime.

|| 10.89.50 ||

tamaḥ su-ghoraṁ gahanaṁ kṛtaṁ mahad vidārayad bhūri-tareṇa rociṣā

mano-javaṁ nirviviśe sudarśanaṁ guṇa-cyuto rāma-śaro yathā camūḥ

TRANSLATION

The Lord's Sudarśana disc penetrated the darkness with its blazing effulgence. Racing forward with the speed of the mind, it cut through the fearsome, dense oblivion expanded from primeval matter, as an arrow shot from Lord Rāma's bow cuts through His enemy's army.

COMMENTARY

Piercing that great dense (*gahanaṁ*) darkness, a transformation of material nature (*kṛtaṁ:prakrti*), the *cakra* entered it.

|| 10.89.51 ||

dvāreṇa cakrānupathena tat tamaḥ paraṁ paraṁ jyotir ananta-pāram

samaśnuvānaṁ prasamīkṣya phālgunaḥ pratāḍitākṣo pidadhe 'kṣiṇī ubhe

TRANSLATION

Following the Sudarśana disc, the chariot went beyond the darkness and reached the endless spiritual light of the all pervasive brahma-jyoti. As Arjuna beheld this glaring effulgence, his eyes hurt, and so he shut them.

COMMENTARY

After breaking through each of the eight concentric shells of the universe, the Sudarśana disc led Kṛṣṇa's chariot into the limitless, self-effulgent atmosphere of the spiritual sky. There Arjuna saw the brilliant effulgence of the *brahmajyoti* beyond the darkness (*tat tamaḥ*) of material nature. Seeing that most excellent spiritual light (*paraṁ:cin-mayam*) spread everywhere (*samaśnuvānaṁ*), Arjuna closed his eyes. Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna's journey to Vaikuṇṭha is also narrated in *Śrī Hari-vaṁśa*, wherein Śrī Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna about the nature of this brilliant light known as His Brahman effulgence:

brahma-tejo-mayaṁ divyaṁ mahat yad dṛṣṭavān asi

ahaṁ sa bharata-śreṣṭha mat-tejas tat sanātanam

"The divine expanse of Brahman effulgence you have seen is none other than Myself, O best of the Bhāratas. It is My own eternal effulgence."

prakṛtiḥ sā mama parā vyaktāvyaktā sanātanī

tāṁ praviśya bhavantīha muktā yoga-vid-uttamāḥ

"It comprises My eternal, spiritual energy, both manifest and unmanifest. The foremost *yoga* experts of this world enter within it and become liberated."

sā sāṅkhyānāṁ gatiḥ pārtha yoginām ca tapasvinām

tat paraṁ paramaṁ brahma sarvaṁ vibhajate jagat

mamaiva tad ghanaṁ tejo jñātum arhasi bhārata

"It is the supreme goal of the followers of Sāṅkhya, O Pārtha, as well as that of the *yogīs* and ascetics. It is the Supreme Absolute Truth, manifesting the varieties of the entire created cosmos. You should understand this *brahma-jyoti*, O Bhārata, to be My concentrated personal effulgence."

|| 10.89.52 ||

tataḥ praviṣṭaḥ salilaṁ nabhasvatā

balīyasaijad-bṛhad-ūrmi-bhūṣaṇam

tatrādbhutaṁ vai bhavanaṁ dyumat-tamaṁ

bhrājan-maṇi-stambha-sahasra-śobhitam

TRANSLATION

From that region they entered a body of water resplendent with huge waves being churned by a mighty wind. Within that ocean Arjuna saw an amazing palace more radiant than anything he had ever seen before. Its beauty was enhanced by thousands of ornamental pillars bedecked with brilliant gems.

COMMENTARY

They entered the Causal Ocean (*salilam*), ornamented with huge waves agitated by a strong wind, and saw a wondrous abode (*ādbhutaṁ bhavanaṁ*) called Mahākāla. Śrīdhara Swāmī describes this city by quoting from the *Mṛtyuñjaya-tantra*:

brahmāṇḍasyordhato divi,

brahmaṇaḥ sadanaṁ mahat tad-ūrdhaṁ divi viṣṇunām,

tad-ūrdhaṁ rudra-rūpiṇāmtad-ūrdhaṁ ca mahā-viṣṇor,

mahā-devyās tad-ūrdha-gam pāre puri mahā-devyāḥ,

kālaḥ sarva-bhayāvahaḥtataḥ śrī-brahma-pīyūṣa,

vāridhir nitya-nūtanaḥ tasya tīre mahā-kālaḥ,

satva-grāhaka-rūpa-dhṛk

> “O Devi, above this universe is the great celestial abode of Brahmā. Above that are the abodes of the expansions of Lord Viṣṇu, and above this are the abodes of the Rudra expansions of Lord Śiva. Above this is the abode of Mahā-Viṣṇu, above which is the supreme residence of Mahā-devī. Above her abode lies time, who strikes fear in all. Beyond it is the ever-fresh spiritual ocean of the nectar of Brahman, along whose shore Lord Mahākāla appears as the supreme controller of all beings.”

In this context, Brahmā’s abode is Satyaloka. The abode of the expansions of Viṣṇu refers to a material planet called Vaikuṇṭha, where the demigod sons of mother Vikuṇṭhā reside. The abode of the expansions of Rudra is Rudraloka located within the covering shell of false ego, *ahaṁkāra*. The abode of Mahā-Viṣṇu is the Mahaviṣṇu-loka located within the covering shell of the *mahat-tattva*. The abode of Mahā-devī is Mahādevī-loka located within the covering shell of unmanifest *prakṛti*. The ocean of the nectar of Brahman is the Causal Ocean. Mahākāla (Mahā-vaikuṇṭha-nātha) is the Lord of Mahā-vaikuṇṭha (Mahākāla-puram), situated in the spiritual sky within the water of the Causal Ocean.

The verb *dadarśa* “saw” appearing in verse fifty-four is understood in this and the following verse. This abode was the most dazzling (*dyumat-tamaṁ*) among all effulgent things.

|| 10.89.53 ||

tasmin mahā-bhogam anantam adbhutaṁ

sahasra-mūrdhanya-phaṇā-maṇi-dyubhiḥ

vibhrājamānaṁ dvi-guṇekṣaṇolbaṇaṁ

sitācalābhaṁ śiti-kaṇṭha-jihvam

TRANSLATION

In that palace was the huge, awe-inspiring serpent Ananta Śeṣa. He shone brilliantly with the radiance emanating from the gems on His thousands of hoods and reflecting from twice as many fearsome eyes. He resembled white Mount Kailāsa, and His necks and tongues were dark blue.

COMMENTARY

First in the palace, Arjuna saw the huge serpent Ananta, who was as white and effulgent as mount Kailāsa (*sitācalābhaṁ*). Ananta’s necks and tongues were dark blue (*śiti*). The *Amara-kośa* dictionary says, *śiti dhavala-mecakau*, “*Śiti* can mean white or dark blue.”

|| 10.89.54-56 ||

dadarśa tad-bhoga-sukhāsanaṁ vibhuṁ

mahānubhāvaṁ puruṣottamottamam

sāndrāmbudābhaṁ su-piśaṅga-vāsasaṁ

prasanna-vaktraṁ rucirāyatekṣaṇam

mahā-maṇi-vrāta-kirīṭa-kuṇḍala

prabhā-parikṣipta-sahasra-kuntalam

pralamba-cārv-aṣṭa-bhujaṁ sa-kaustubhaṁ

śrīvatsa-lakṣmaṁ vana-mālayāvṛtam

sunanda-nanda-pramukhaiḥ sva-pārṣadaiś

cakrādibhir mūrti-dharair nijāyudhaiḥ

puṣṭyā śrīyā kīrty-ajayākhilardhibhir

niṣevyamānaṁ parameṣṭhināṁ patim

TRANSLATION

Arjuna then saw the omnipresent and omnipotent Supreme Personality of Godhead, Mahā-Viṣṇu, sitting at ease on the serpent bed. His bluish complexion was the color of a dense raincloud, He wore a beautiful yellow garment, His face looked charming, His broad eyes were most attractive, and He had eight long, handsome arms. His profuse locks of hair were bathed on all sides in the brilliance reflected from the clusters of precious jewels decorating His crown and earrings. He wore the Kaustubha gem, the mark of Śrīvatsa and a garland of forest flowers. Serving that topmost of all Lords were His personal attendants, headed by Sunanda and Nanda; His cakra and other weapons in their personified forms; His consort potencies Puṣṭi, Śrī, Kīrti and Ajā; and all His various mystic powers.

COMMENTARY

(Texts 54-55) Arjuna saw Viṣṇu relaxing upon the comfortable seat (*sukhāsanaṁ*) of Ananta's body (*bhoga*). Among the three *puruṣas* (Brahmā, Śiva and Viṣṇu), the *guṇāvatāra*, Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, is supreme. Greater than Him however is Mahā-Viṣṇu, the creator of the *mahat-tattva*. And greater than Him is Lord Puruśottama (*puruṣottamottamam*), Viṣṇu in Vaikuṇṭha, who is herein called Mahākāla.

(Text 56) The personified forms of Viṣṇu's weapons such as the *cakra* were there, each displaying their respective symbols above their own heads.

|| 10.89.57 ||

vavanda ātmānam anantam acyuto jiṣṇuś ca tad-darśana-jāta-sādhvasaḥ

tāv āha bhūmā parameṣṭhināṁ prabhur beddhāñjalī sa-smitam ūrjayā girā

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa offered homage to Himself in this boundless form, and Arjuna, astonished at the sight of Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu, bowed down as well. Then, as the two of them stood before Him with joined palms, the almighty Mahā-Viṣṇu, supreme master of all rulers of the universe, smiled and spoke to them in a voice full of solemn authority.

COMMENTARY

As Kṛṣṇa offered obeisances to His own Deity during the worship of Govardhana Hill in *vraja-līlā*, so now also Kṛṣṇa paid homage to Himself (*vavanda ātmānam*) in His

Viṣṇu expansion for the purpose of playing out His pastimes. This is stated in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.24.36): *tasmai namo vraja-janaiḥ, saha cakra ātmanātmane*, "Together with the Vrajavāsīs, Śrī Kṛṣṇa bowed down to this form of Govardhana Hill, thus in effect offering obeisances to Himself."

Kṛṣṇa is *ananta*, possessed of countless manifestations, and this eight-armed form of Mahā-Viṣṇu is among them. Kṛṣṇa is *acyuta*, "infallible," in the sense that He never fails to act like a human being in His pastimes as a cowherd boy of Vraja. Thus in order to preserve the humanlike quality of His pastimes, Kṛṣṇa bowed down to this eight-armed form of Viṣṇu, who, though actually Kṛṣṇa's own plenary expansion, did not offer obeisances to Kṛṣṇa because he was playing the role of the Supreme Lord.

Arjuna perceived that this form of Viṣṇu had even more opulence than Kṛṣṇa, and thus he became astonished (*jāta-sādhvasaḥ*). The word *bhumā* (abundant power of the earth) indicates that Mahā-Viṣṇu was exhibiting even more personal majesty than Kṛṣṇa Himself by appearing before Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna as the Lord of multitudes of Brahmās (*parameṣṭhināṁ prabhuḥ*) ruling over millions of universes.

Mahā-Viṣṇu then spoke confident words (*ūrjayā girā*) in order to bewilder Arjuna, in obedience to Śrī Kṛṣṇa's intention. Viṣṇu's smile (*smitam*) indicates that He was privately thinking: "My dear Kṛṣṇa, by Your desire I will describe My superiority, even though I am Your expansion. At the same time, however, I will subtly imply in My statements the supreme position of Your beauty, character and power and the fact that You are the source from whom I emanate. Just see how clever I am—-that in front of Arjuna I am confidentially divulging My true identity as nondifferent from You."

Mahā-Visnu's smile indicates His request that Kṛṣṇa later reveal to Arjuna the truth about His actual position.

|| 10.89.58 ||

dvijātmajā me yuvayor didṛkṣuṇā mayopanītā bhuvi dharma-guptaye

kalāvatīrṇāv avaner bharāsurān hatveha bhūyas tvarayetam anti me

TRANSLATION

[Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu said:] I brought the brāhmaṇa's sons here because I wanted to see the two of you, My expansions, who have descended to the earth to save the principles of religion. As soon as you finish killing the demons who burden the earth, quickly come back here to Me.

COMMENTARY

Mahā-Viṣṇu said, “You two who have appeared as My parts, please come back (*itam*) quickly (*tvaraya*) to Me (*me anti*).” He says this to bewilder Arjuna.

The real meaning is, “You two, who have descended along with your *kalās*, your personal energies (*kalās:sva-saktibhiḥ*), should kindly return to Me after killing the demons who burden the earth. Please quickly send these demons here to Me for the sake of their liberation.” The verb is a dual imperative form. Anti is an un-declined word, meaning “towards proximity.” “Let them come here and be liberated.” It is stated in *Śrī Hari-vamśa* and in the Second Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that the path of gradual liberation passes through the intermediate station of Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu’s abode, outside the eighth shell of the universe.

|| 10.89.59 ||

pūrṇa-kāmāv api yuvāṁ nara-nārāyaṇāv ṛṣī

dharmam ācaratāṁ sthityai ṛṣabhau loka-saṅgraham

TRANSLATION

Although all your desires are completely fulfilled, O best of exalted personalities, for the benefit of the people in general you should continue to exemplify religious behavior as the sages Nara and Nārāyaṇa.

COMMENTARY

Mahā-Viṣṇu said, “Follow dharma (*ācaratām*) to teach others.”

|| 10.89.60-61 ||

ity ādiṣṭau bhagavatā tau kṛṣṇau parame-ṣṭhinā

oṁ ity ānamya bhūmānam ādāya dvija-dārakān

nyavartetāṁ svakaṁ dhāma samprahṛṣṭau yathā-gatam

viprāya dadatuḥ putrān yathā-rūpaṁ yathā-vayaḥ

TRANSLATION

Thus instructed by the Supreme Lord of the topmost planet, Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna assented by chanting oṁ, and then they bowed down to almighty Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu. Taking the brāhmaṇa’s sons with them, they returned with great delight to Dvārakā by the same path along which they had come. There they

presented the brāhmaṇa with his sons, who were in the same infant bodies in which they had been lost.

|| 10.89.62 ||

niśāmya vaiṣṇavaṁ dhāma pārthaḥ parama-vismitaḥ

yat kiñcit pauruṣaṁ puṁsāṁ mene kṛṣṇānukampitam

TRANSLATION

Having seen the domain of Lord Viṣṇu, Arjuna was totally amazed. He concluded that whatever extraordinary power a person exhibits can only be a manifestation of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's mercy.

COMMENTARY

Astonished to see the extraordinary grandeur of Mahā-Viṣṇu, Arjuna said "Just see! Even though I am a mere mortal, by Kṛṣṇa's mercy I have seen the Supreme Godhead, the root cause of everything." Then, after a moment, Arjuna thought again, "But why did Lord Viṣṇu say that He took away the *brāhmaṇa's* children out of a desire to see Kṛṣṇa? Why would the Supreme Personality of Godhead hanker to see His own expansion? Perhaps, it is some temporary whim of His.

"But," since He said *didṛkṣuṇā* instead of *didṛkṣatā*—where the specific suffix *-ṣuṇā* carries the sense of a permanent characteristic, not a temporary one—it has to be concluded that He has always desired to see Kṛṣṇa and myself. Even granted that this is so, why couldn't He simply see Kṛṣṇa at Dvārakā? After all, Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu is the all-pervading creator of the universe, which He holds like an *āmalaki* fruit in His hand.

"Is it that He could not see Kṛṣṇa in Dvārakā because Kṛṣṇa does not allow anyone to see Him without His special sanction? Well, maybe He doesn't have that power, but still, He comes to Dvārakā every year to steal the children of the *brāhmaṇa*. Why does He not at that time see Kṛṣṇa, who is visible even to the oil seller and the betel-nut peddler living there? Perhaps He could not see Kṛṣṇa in Dvārakā because Kṛṣṇa cannot be seen without Kṛṣṇa's desiring it."

"And why, also, would Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu, the compassionate master of all *brāhmaṇas*, have repeatedly tormented an elevated *brāhmaṇa*, year after year? He must have perpetrated such a vile act only because of His strong desire to see Kṛṣṇa. All right, He may have acted improperly for that reason, but why couldn't He have sent a servant to kidnap the *brāhmaṇa's* sons? Why did He Himself have to come to Dvārakā? Was stealing them out of Kṛṣṇa's capital so difficult that no one but Viṣṇu Himself could hope to accomplish it?"

“I can understand that He intended to cause so much distress to a *brāhmaṇa* of Kṛṣṇa’s city that Kṛṣṇa would be unable to tolerate it; then He would grant Lord Viṣṇu His audience. Inspired by Visnu’s form as the Supersoul within, the distressed *brāhmaṇa* came to pour out his complaints to Kṛṣṇa in person after the demise of each of his infant sons. Thus it is clear that Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s status of Godhood is superior to Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu’s.”

Having thought in this way, Arjuna was totally amazed (*parama vismitaḥ*). Then Arjuna asked Kṛṣṇa whether these were actually the facts of the matter. Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s reply is related in the *Hari-vaṁśa*:

mad-darśanārthaṁ te bālā hṛtās tena mahātmanā

viprārtham eṣyate kṛṣṇo mat-samīpaṁ na cānyathā

“It was to see Me that He, the Supreme Soul, stole the children. He believed, ‘Only on a *brāhmaṇa’s* behalf will Kṛṣṇa come to see Me, not otherwise.’”

Kṛṣṇa further told Arjuna, “I did not go there, however, for the *brāhmaṇa’s* sake; I went there, My friend, just to save your life. If it had been for the *brāhmaṇa’s* sake that I traveled to Vaikuṇṭha, I would have done so after his first child was abducted. The reason I went after the ninth child was stolen, was not from obligation to Viṣṇu, but out of obligation to you.” Thus hearing the full truth from Kṛṣṇa’s mouth, Arjuna thought that whatever prowess (*pauruṣaṁ*) is possessed by any person (*puṁsāṁare*), even including the Lord of the spiritual sky, has been obtained only by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa.

In this way we should understand that in this last portion of the Tenth Canto, from the prayers of the personified *Vedas* through the end of the narration, is found the description of the supreme position of Kṛṣṇa, the *āśraya-tattva*, who is the subject of the Tenth Canto. According to Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī, although this pastime occurred before the Battle of Kuruksetra, it is recounted here at the end of the Tenth Canto under the general heading of the supremacy of Kṛṣṇa’s glories.

|| 10.89.63 ||

itīdṛśāny anekāni vīryāṇīha pradarśayan

bubhuje viṣayān grāmyān īje cāty-urjitair makhaiḥ

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa exhibited many other, similar heroic pastimes in this world. He apparently enjoyed the pleasures of ordinary human life, and He performed greatly potent fire sacrifices.

|| 10.89.64 ||

pravavarṣākhilān kāmān prajāsu brāhmaṇādiṣu

yathā-kālaṁ yathaivendro bhagavān śraiṣṭhyam āsthitaḥ

TRANSLATION

The Lord having demonstrated His supremacy, at suitable times He showered down all desirable things upon the brāhmaṇas and His other subjects, just as Indra pours down his rain.

|| 10.89.65 ||

hatvā nṛpān adharmiṣṭhān ghāṭayitvārjunādibhiḥ

añjasā vartayām āsa dharmaṁ dharma-sutādibhiḥ

TRANSLATION

Now that He had killed many wicked kings and engaged devotees such as Arjuna in killing others, the Lord could easily assure the execution of religious principles through the agency of such pious rulers as Yudhiṣṭhira.

Thus ends the commentary on the Eighty-ninth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* for the pleasure of the devotees, in accordance with the previous *ācāryas.*

Summary of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s Glories

|| 10.90.1-7 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

sukhaṁ sva-puryāṁ nivasan dvārakāyāṁ śriyaḥ patiḥ

sarva-sampat-samṛddhāyāṁ juṣṭāyāṁ vṛṣṇi-puṅgavaiḥ

strībhiś cottama-veṣābhir nava-yauvana-kāntibhiḥ

kandukādibhir harmyeṣu krīḍantībhis taḍid-dyubhiḥ

nityaṁ saṅkula-mārgāyāṁ mada-cyudbhir mataṅ-gajaiḥ

sv-alaṅkṛtair bhaṭair aśvai rathaiś ca kanakojjvalaiḥ

udyānopavanāḍhyāyāṁ puṣpita-druma-rājiṣu

nirviśad-bhṛṅga-vihagair nāditāyāṁ samantataḥ

reme ṣoḍaśa-sāhasra-patnīnāṁ eka-vallabhaḥ

tāvad vicitra-rūpo ’sau tad-geheṣu maharddhiṣu

protphullotpala-kahlāra-kumudāmbhoja-reṇubhiḥ

vāsitāmala-toyeṣu kūjad-dvija-kuleṣu ca

vijahāra vigāhyāmbho hradinīṣu mahodayaḥ

kuca-kuṅkuma-liptāṅgaḥ parirabdhaś ca yoṣitām

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvamī said: The master of the goddess of fortune resided happily in His capital city, Dvārakā, which was endowed with all opulences and populated by the most eminent Vṛṣṇis and their gorgeously dressed wives. When these beautiful women in the bloom of youth would play on the city's rooftops with balls and other toys, they shone like flashing lightning. The main streets of the city were always crowded with intoxicated elephants exuding mada, and also with cavalry, richly adorned infantrymen, and soldiers riding chariots brilliantly decorated with gold. Gracing the city were many gardens and parks with rows of flowering trees, where bees and birds would gather, filling all directions with their songs.

Lord Kṛṣṇa was the sole beloved of His sixteen thousand wives. Expanding Himself into that many forms, He enjoyed with each of His queens in her own richly furnished residence. On the grounds of these palaces were clear ponds fragrant with the pollen of blooming utpala, kahlāra, kumuda and ambhoja lotuses and filled with flocks of cooing birds. The almighty Lord would enter those ponds, and also various rivers, and enjoy sporting in the water while His wives embraced Him, leaving the red kuṅkuma from their breasts smeared on His body.

COMMENTARY

This chapter describes the *prema-vaicittya* of the Dvārakā Mahiṣīs (Queens of Dvārakā) during their water sports with Kṛṣṇa, the power of the Yadu dynasty, and the eternal nature of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes.

[*Prema-vaicittya* is one of four states of love in separation (*vipralambha*) wherein even in the beloved's presence, the lover, out of intense love, fails to perceive the presence of the beloved and is thus aggrieved with feelings of separation.]

According to the maxim *madhureṇa samāpayet*, "all things should end sweetly" Śukadeva Gosvāmī has described Śrī Kṛṣṇa's water sports in the attractive setting of Dvārakā, followed by the rapturous prayers of the Dvārakā Mahiṣīs, which are known as the *mahiṣī-gīta*. In the first verse, Śukadeva describes the attractiveness of Dvārakā to serve as an *uddīpana*, stimulator for loving sentiments. He elaborately describes how Kṛṣṇa enjoyed in all those palaces, sported in the royal ponds full of pure, fragrant water, and then played in the clear rivers. While enjoying in the water, Kṛṣṇa embraced His consorts (*parirabdhas ca yoṣitām*).

|| 10.90.8-9 ||

upagīyamāno gandharvair mṛdaṅga-paṇavānakān

vādayadbhir mudā vīṇāṁ sūta-māgadha-vandibhiḥ

sicyamāno ’cyutas tābhir hasantībhiḥ sma recakaiḥ

pratiṣiñcan vicikrīḍe yakṣībhir yakṣa-rāḍ iva

TRANSLATION

As Gandharvas joyfully sang His praises to the accompaniment of mṛdaṅga, paṇava and ānaka drums, and as professional reciters known as Sūtas, Māgadhas and Vandīs played vīṇās and recited poems praising Him, Lord Kṛṣṇa would play with His wives in the water. Laughing, the queens would squirt water on Him with syringes, and He would squirt them back. Thus Kṛṣṇa would sport with His queens in the same way that the lord of the Yakṣas sports with the Yakṣī nymphs.

COMMENTARY

The Queens soaked Kṛṣṇa’s body with water from their water guns (*recakaiḥ*). They are compared to the Yakṣis because of the ferocity of their sporting.

|| 10.90.10 ||

tāḥ klinna-vastra-vivṛtoru-kuca-pradeśāḥ

siñcantya uddhṛta-bṛhat-kavara-prasūnāḥ

kāntaṁ sma recaka-jihīrṣayayopaguhya

jāta-smarotsmaya-lasad-vadanā virejuḥ

TRANSLATION

Under the drenched clothing of the queens, their thighs and breasts would become visible. The flowers tied in their large braids would scatter as they sprayed water on their consort, and on the plea of trying to take away His syringe, they would embrace Him. By His touch their lusty feelings would increase, causing their faces to beam with smiles. Thus Lord Kṛṣṇa’s queens shone with resplendent beauty.

COMMENTARY

The flowers fell (*uddhṛta*) from their long hair braids.

|| 10.90.11 ||

kṛṣṇas tu tat-stana-viṣajjita-kuṅkuma-srak

krīḍābhiṣaṅga-dhuta-kuntala-vṛnda-bandhaḥ

siñcan muhur yuvatibhiḥ pratiṣicyamāno

reme kareṇubhir ivebha-patiḥ parītaḥ

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa's flower garland would become smeared with kuṅkuma from their breasts, and His abundant locks of hair would become disheveled as a result of His absorption in the game. As the Lord repeatedly sprayed His young consorts and they sprayed Him in turn, He enjoyed Himself like the king of elephants enjoying in the company of his bevy of she-elephants.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa's garland was smeared with the *kuṇkuma* from their breasts.

|| 10.90.12 ||

naṭānāṁ nartakīnāṁ ca gīta-vādyopajīvinām

krīḍālaṅkāra-vāsāṁsi kṛṣṇo 'dāt tasya ca striyaḥ

TRANSLATION

Afterward, Lord Kṛṣṇa and His wives would give the ornaments and clothing they had worn during their water sports to the male and female performers, who earned their livelihood from singing and from playing instrumental music.

COMMENTARY

Afterwards, Kṛṣṇa and His queens gave the ornaments and clothing used during their water sports to the musical performers (*naṭānāṁ*). In the word *naṭānām* (male performers) the genitive case is used for the dative case.

|| 10.90.13 ||

kṛṣṇasyaivaṁ viharato gaty-ālāpekṣita-smitaiḥ

narma-kṣveli-pariṣvaṅgaiḥ strīṇāṁ kila hṛtā dhiyaḥ

TRANSLATION

In this way Lord Kṛṣṇa would sport with His queens, totally captivating their hearts with His gestures, talks, glances and smiles, and also with His jokes, playful exchanges and embraces.

|| 10.90.14 ||

ūcur mukundaika-dhiyo gira unmatta-vaj jaḍam

cintayantyo 'ravindākṣaṁ tāni me gadataḥ śṛṇu

TRANSLATION

The queens would become stunned in ecstatic trance, their minds absorbed in Kṛṣṇa alone. Then, thinking of their lotus-eyed Lord, they would speak as if insane. Please hear these words from me as I relate them.

COMMENTARY

Thinking of lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa, who was visible right before them, the Queens spoke as if mad (*unmattavat*) in words devoid of judgment (*jaḍam:vicāra-sūnyam*).

This superficial appearance of insanity in Kṛṣṇa's queens, as if they had become intoxicated by *dhatūra* or some other hallucinogenic drug, was in fact the manifestation of the sixth stage of *prema*, a variety of *anurāga* known as *prema-vaicittya*. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī refers to this variety of anurāga in his Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi (15.134):

priyasya sannikarṣe 'pi premotkarṣa-svabhāvataḥ

yā viśleṣa-dhiyārtis tat prema-vaicitryam ucyate

"When, as a natural by-product of one's extreme love, one feels the distress of separation even in the direct presence of the beloved, this state is called *prema-vaicitrya*."

|| 10.90.15 ||

mahiṣya ūcuḥ

kurari vilapasi tvaṁ vīta-nidrā na śeṣe

svapiti jagati rātryām īśvaro gupta-bodhaḥ

vayam iva sakhi kaccid gāḍha-nirviddha-cetā

nalina-nayana-hāsodāra-līlekṣitena

TRANSLATION

The queens said: O kurarī bird, you are lamenting. Now it is night, and somewhere in this world the Supreme Lord is asleep in a hidden place. But you are wide awake, O friend, unable to fall asleep. Is it that, like us, you have had your heart pierced to the core by the lotus-eyed Lord's munificent, playful smiling glances?

COMMENTARY

The transcendental madness (*unmāda*) of the queens filled them with such ecstasy that they saw their own mood reflected in everyone and everything else. This is expressed in ten verses (15-24) known as the *mahiṣī-gīta*.

The Queens said, "O *kurarī* (osprey)! You are sorrowing in separation from your beloved and therefore cannot sleep. But that person, the Supreme Lord and our husband, has no love for you; for He is sleeping, and does not hear your lamentations. Thus the mercy of His that might arise from hearing your lamentation, and by which He might associate with you, will not manifest."

If the *kurarī* bird were to ask, "Well then, is Kṛṣṇa sleeping with you?" the Queens would respond, "No, not at all! His whereabouts are unknown (*gupta-bodhaḥ*) to us. He is out in the world somewhere this night, but we have no idea where to go looking for Him. O Śiva! Śiva! Oh, dear bird, even though you are a simple creature, your heart has been deeply pierced, just like ours. You must have had some contact, then, with our Kṛṣṇa and become attracted to His lotus eyes, broad smile and playful glances. Due to your hopeless attachment, you cannot stop thinking, 'Certainly I will meet Him.'"

|| 10.90.16 ||

netre nimīlayasi naktam adṛṣṭa-bandhus

tvaṁ roravīṣi karuṇaṁ bata cakravāki

dāsyaṁ gata vayam ivācyuta-pāda-juṣṭāṁ

kiṁ vā srajaṁ spṛhayase kavareṇa voḍhum

TRANSLATION

Poor cakravākī, even after closing your eyes, you continue to cry pitifully through the night for your unseen mate. Or is it that, like us, you have become

the servant of Acyuta and hanker to wear in your braided hair the garland He has blessed with the touch of His feet?

COMMENTARY

The Queens said, “O cakravākī, are you unable to find your husband (*adṛṣta-bandhuḥ*)? Alas, such a painful cry must be due to separation from your children.” They then speak of an alternative reason for lamenting. “Perhaps you are like us, who have become servants of Acyuta (*dāsyaṁ gata*), and desire to bind in our hair the garland which touched His feet.”

|| 10.90.17 ||

bho bhoḥ sadā niṣṭanase udanvann

alabdha-nidro ’dhigata-prajāgaraḥ

kim vā mukundāpahṛtātma-lāñchanaḥ

prāptāṁ daśāṁ tvaṁ ca gato duratyayām

TRANSLATION

Dear ocean, you are always roaring, not sleeping at night. Are you suffering insomnia? Or is it that, as with us, Mukunda has taken your insignias and you are hopeless of retrieving them?

COMMENTARY

The Queens said, “O ocean, giving up your gravity, you are making loud sounds like a disturbed person. Not being able to sleep, you keep tossing and turning and crying with loud shrieks. Please tell us the reason? Well, even if you do not tell us the reason, we know it anyway. Just as, on the pretext of enjoying conjugal love with us, that thief stole our *kuṇkuma*-smeared pearl necklaces and flower garlands, similarly, He has stolen Lakṣmī, the Kaustubha jewel and the other things which arose from you.”

|| 10.90.18 ||

tvaṁ yakṣmaṇā balavatāsi gṛhīta indo

kṣīṇas tamo na nija-dīdhitibhiḥ kṣiṇoṣi

kaccin mukunda-gaditāni yathā vayaṁ tvaṁ

vismṛtya bhoḥ sthagita-gīr upalakṣyase naḥ

TRANSLATION

My dear moon, having contracted a severe case of tuberculosis, you have become so emaciated that you fail to dispel the darkness with your rays. Or is it that you appear dumbstruck because, like us, you cannot remember the encouraging promises Mukunda once made to you?

COMMENTARY

The Queens said, “O moon, are you becoming thin and losing your power to remove darkness because of emaciation from tuberculosis? No, this cannot be the cause, but rather we know the cause. You have forgotten those clever words and profuse promises that Mukunda made at the beginning of separation. Due to the extremely distraught condition you were in, you did not pay attention to them at that time.”

“Now you cannot remember those words of Mukunda. Because of this great calamity you are all choked up and appear dumb-struck. Therefore, since you do not answer our question, and simply cry like the osprey and *cakravākī*, you must be feeling the separation we feel from Kṛṣṇa. Thus, you are lamenting over having forgotten His words and just remain here silent and shattered.”

|| 10.90.19 ||

kiṁ nv ācaritam asmābhir malayānila te ’priyam

govindāpāṅga-nirbhinne hṛdīrayasi naḥ smaram

TRANSLATION

O Malayan breeze, what have we done to displease you, so that you stir up lust in our hearts, which have already been shattered by Govinda’s sidelong glances?

COMMENTARY

The Queens said, “O Malayan breeze, have we committed some offense (*apriyam:vairam*) to you? It seems that you are taking revenge by inciting lust in us at this time of distress.”

|| 10.90.20 ||

megha śrīmaṁs tvam asi dayito yādavendrasya nūnaṁ

śrīvatsāṅkaṁ vayam iva bhavān dhyāyati prema-baddhaḥ

aty-utkaṇṭhaḥ śavala-hṛdayo ’smad-vidho bāṣpa-dhārāḥ

smṛtvā smṛtvā visṛjasi muhur duḥkha-das tat-prasaṅgaḥ

TRANSLATION

O revered cloud, you are indeed very dear to the chief of the Yādavas, who bears the mark of Śrīvatsa. Like us, you are bound to Him by love and are meditating upon Him. Your heart is distraught with great eagerness, as our hearts are, and as you remember Him again and again you shed a torrent of tears. Association with Kṛṣṇa brings such misery!

COMMENTARY

The Queens said, "O cloud, you are Kṛṣṇa's friend (*dayito*), and being bound by love you always meditate upon Him. Although you share Kṛṣṇa's blue complexion, it is Kṛṣṇa's distinctive features, such as His Śrīvatsa mark (*śrīvatsāṅkaṁ*), that especially attract you. But what is the result? Simply unhappiness: Your heart is tainted by depression (*śavala-hṛdayo:viṣāda-malina-cetāḥ*), and you are constantly shedding tears on the pretext of raining. Why did you become attracted to Kṛṣṇa, since association with Him brings only suffering?"

|| 10.90.21 ||

priya-rāva-padāni bhāṣase mṛta-sañjīvikayānayā girā

karavāṇi kim adya te priyaṁ vada me valgita-kaṇṭha kokila

TRANSLATION

O sweet-throated cuckoo, in a voice that could revive the dead you are vibrating the same sounds we once heard from our beloved, the most pleasing of speakers. Please tell me what I can do today to please you.

COMMENTARY

The Queens said, "O cuckoo, your sweet words (*priya-rāva*) deliver us from the pain of separation (*padāni*) from Kṛṣṇa." The word *pada* can mean determination, deliverance, foot, mark, article or place according the *Amara-kośa* dictionary which says: *padam vyavasiti-trāṇa-sthāna-lakṣmāñghri-vastuṣu*. In reality, the sweet song of the cuckoo is painful because it reminds the Queens of their beloved Kṛṣṇa and exacerbates their distress of separation. Therefore, words like *priya-rāva* (pleasant sound) have a sarcastic intention.

Thus the implied meaning is, "O sweet-throated one (*valgita-kaṇṭha*)! What may I do to please you, who are making me burn in torment by your songs? I should set your beak on fire!"

|| 10.90.22 ||

na calasi na vadasy udāra-buddhe kṣiti-dhara cintayase mahāntam artham

api bata vasudeva-nandanāṅghriṁ vayam iva kāmayase stanair vidhartum

TRANSLATION

O magnanimous mountain, you neither move nor speak. You must be pondering some matter of great importance. Or do you, like us, desire to hold on your breasts the feet of Vasudeva's darling son?

COMMENTARY

The Queens said, "O holder of the earth, Raivataka Mountain! Certainly you must be thinking about your desired goal (*mahāntam artham*), and thus you remain silent and unmoving. Perhaps (*api bata*) this is your desire: Just as we hanker to hold Śyāmasundara's lotus feet on our raised breasts (*stanaiḥ*), you desire to place them on your raised peaks (*stanaiḥ*). If that is so, then you will end up in the same predicament as us."

|| 10.90.23 ||

śuṣyad-dhradāḥ karaśitā bata sindhu-patnyaḥ

sampraty apāsta-kamala-śriya iṣṭa-bhartuḥ

yadvad vayaṁ madhu-pateḥ praṇayāvalokam

aprāpya muṣṭa-hṛdayāḥ puru-karśitāḥ sma

TRANSLATION

O rivers, wives of the ocean, your pools have now dried up. Alas, you have shriveled to nothing, and your wealth of lotuses has vanished. Are you, then, like us, who are withering away because of not receiving the affectionate glance of our dear husband, the Lord of Madhu, who has cheated our hearts?

COMMENTARY

The Queens said, "O rivers, wives of the ocean, your pools have all dried up and we know the cause. By not obtaining the loving glance of your husband, the Lord of Madhu, who bestows all desired happiness even for you, the wives of the ocean, you have become just like us, who have failed to obtain Śyama's loving glance, and whose hearts have thus been cheated (*muṣṭa-hṛdayāḥ:vañcita-cittāḥ*). Thus like us you have become lean and thin, and are no longer beautified by blooming lotus flowers."

|| 10.90.24 ||

haṁsa svāgatam āsyatāṁ piba payo brūhy aṅga śaureḥ kathāṁ

dūtaṁ tvāṁ nu vidāma kaccid ajitaḥ svasty āsta uktaṁ purā

kiṁ vā naś cala-sauhṛdaḥ smarati taṁ kasmād bhajāmo vayaṁ

kṣaudrālāpaya kāma-daṁ śriyam ṛte saivaika-niṣṭhā striyām

TRANSLATION

Welcome, swan. Please sit here and drink some milk. Give us some news of the descendant of Śūra, dear one. We know you are His messenger. Is that invincible Lord doing well, and does that unreliable friend of ours still remember the words He spoke to us long ago? Why should we go and worship Him? O servant of a petty master, go tell Him who fulfills our desires to come here without the goddess of fortune. Is she the only woman exclusively devoted to Him?

COMMENTARY

Imagining that some swan was a messenger, the queens addressed him as follows: "Is the unconquerable Lord doing well?"

The swan replied, "How can Kṛṣṇa be happy without you, His beloved consorts?"

Queens**:** "But does Kṛṣṇa even remember the affectionate words that He once told one of us, Śrīmatī Rukmiṇī? Does He recall that He said, 'In all My palaces I see no other wife as dear as you'? (*na tvādṛśīṁ praṇayiṇīṁ gṛhiṇīṁ gṛheṣu paśyāmi*, SB 10.60.55) Being unwavering in His love, does He remember this assurance?"

Swan**:** "He does indeed remember this, and that is just why He sent me here. You should all go to Kṛṣṇa and worship Him."

Queens**:** "If Kṛṣṇa does remember, why is He not responding by coming here. Therefore, why should we go worship Him if He refuses to come here to be with us?"

Swan**:** "But my dear oceans of compassion, Kṛṣṇa is suffering so much in your absence! How can He be saved from this distress?"

Queens**:** "Just listen, O servant of a petty master (*kṣaudra*). Tell Kṛṣṇa to come here, as He should. If He is tormented by lusty desires, He has only Himself to blame, since He Himself is the creator of Cupid's power. We self-respecting ladies are not going to yield to His demand that we go seek Him out."

Swan**:** "So be it; then I will take my leave."

Thinking that the swan would agree and go call Kṛṣṇa, the queens addressed him once more: “No, one minute, dear swan. Ask Kṛṣṇa to come here to us, but without the goddess of fortune, who always cheats us by keeping Him all to herself.”

Swan**:** “Don’t you know that Goddess Lakṣmī is devoted exclusively (*eka-niṣṭhā*) to the Lord? How could He give her up like that?”

Queens**:** “And is she the only woman (*striyām*) in the world who is completely sold out (*eka-niṣṭhā*) to Him? What about us?” Though the word *striyām* is singular, it represents a whole category.

If we take the alternate reading *kṣaudrālāpam akāma-dam*, the word *kṣaudra* means “honey.” Then the meaning is: “Why should we worship Him who simply speaks sweetly (*mandhurālāpa-mātram*) but does not fulfill our desires for love? The goddess of fortune will continue to worship Him time and time again even if she is dishonored, whereas such proud women as us are *eka-niṣṭhā* in the sense that we are interested only in our reputation and gaining respect.”

|| 10.90.25 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

itīdṛśena bhāvena kṛṣṇe yogeśvareśvare

kriyamāṇena mādhavyo lebhire paramāṁ gatim

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: By thus speaking and acting with such ecstatic love for Lord Kṛṣṇa, the master of all masters of mystic yoga, His loving wives attained the ultimate goal of life.

COMMENTARY

“What goal was attained by these women who possessed such pure ecstatic love?” This verse answers. [note: In Viśvanātha Cakravartī pada’s edition of *Bhāgavatam*, the last words in the verse are *vaiṣṇavim gatim*, rather than *paramāṁ gatim* (ultimate goal), therefore, he comments on the words *vaiṣṇaviṁ gatim*.]

The supreme goal (*paramāṁ gatim*) attained by the Dvārakā Mahiṣīs was not the liberation of the impersonal *yogīs*, but they attained the supreme goal obtainable by Vaiṣṇavas (*vaiṣṇaviṁ gatim*), namely *prema-bhakti*, pure loving devotion. Indeed, since the queens were already imbued with divine love of God from the very beginning, they possessed transcendental bodies of eternity, knowledge and bliss, in which they fully relished the pleasure of associating with Kṛṣṇa in His most intimate

pastimes. Having already tasted the blissful sweetness of Kṛṣṇa's sublime association, which far surpasses the taste of merging in Brahman, it would be impossible for these exalted women to again obtain such fruits as liberation, the ultimate goal (*paramāṁ gatim*) mentioned in this verse. Therefore, their attainment could only be more intense *prema*.

The word *vaiṣṇavi* can also mean "of Viṣṇu or of Kṛṣṇa." Therefore, the phrase *vaiṣṇaviṁ gatim* means that the Dvārakā Mahiṣīs attained the position (*gatim*) of Kṛṣṇa. In other words, their *prema* matured into the ecstasy of madness in pure love (*bhāvonmada*), just as the *gopīs*' love did when Kṛṣṇa disappeared from their midst during the *rāsa* dance. At that time the *gopīs* experienced the full development of ecstatic madness in which they completely identified themselves with Kṛṣṇa.

Inquiring from the various creatures of the forest, the gopīs said, *kṛṣṇo 'ham paśyata gatim*: "I am Kṛṣṇa! Just see how gracefully I move!" (SB 10.30.19) In the same way, the Dvārakā Mahiṣīs attained the topmost goal (*paramāṁ gatim*) of becoming fully absorbed in Kṛṣṇa after asking questions to the osprey (*kurarī*) and others. Dv*ā*rak*ā*dhīśa's principal queens reached a level of *prema* known as *anurāga*, wherein the *vilāsa* (flourishing transformations) of their ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa produced the *prema-vaicitrya* symptoms they have exhibited here. The stage of *anurāga* is described in *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇī*.

|| 10.90.26 ||

śruta-mātro 'pi yaḥ strīṇāṁ prasahyākarṣate manaḥ

uru-gāyoru-gīto vā paśyantīnāṁ ca kiṁ punaḥ

TRANSLATION

The Lord, whom countless songs glorify in countless ways, forcibly attracts the minds of all women who simply hear about Him. What to speak, then, of those women who see Him directly?

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa, being excellently glorified by many songs (*gāyoru:gāna-prabandhaiḥ*), forcibly attracts the minds of all women who simply hear about Him. But (*vā*) what to speak of those women who see Him directly?

|| 10.90.27 ||

yāḥ samparyacaran premṇā pāda-saṁvāhanādibhiḥ

jagad-guruṁ bhartṛ-buddhyā tāsāṁ kim varṇyate tapaḥ

TRANSLATION

And how could one possibly describe the great austerities that had been performed by the women who perfectly served Him, the spiritual master of the universe, in pure ecstatic love? Thinking of Him as their husband, they rendered such intimate services as massaging His feet.

COMMENTARY

One may ask, “How can their austerities be described?”

“They cannot be described because they were *nitya-siddhas*, eternally perfect devotees, and did not have to perform any austerities.”

Or one may ask, “For those among them who were *sādhana siddhas* (attained perfection by regulative practice), what type of austerities did they perform in their past lives to get that position?”

This verse answers by saying, “Thinking of Kṛṣṇa as their husband, they served Him by massaging His feet.”

|| 10.90.28 ||

evaṁ vedoditaṁ dharmam anutiṣṭhan satāṁ gatiḥ

gṛhaṁ dharmārtha-kāmānāṁ muhuś cādarśayat padam

TRANSLATION

Thus observing the principles of duty enunciated in the Vedas, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the goal of the saintly devotees, repeatedly demonstrated how one can achieve at home the objectives of religiosity, economic development and regulated sense gratification.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa showed that one’s home can be a place (*padam:sthānam*) for achieving *dharma, artha* and *kāma* (religiosity, wealth and regulated sense pleasure).

|| 10.90.29 ||

āsthitasya paraṁ dharmaṁ kṛṣṇasya gṛha-medhinām

āsan ṣoḍaśa-sāhasraṁ mahiṣyaś ca śatādhikam

TRANSLATION

While fulfilling the highest standards of religious householder life, Lord Kṛṣṇa maintained more than 16,100 wives.

|| 10.90.30 ||

tāsāṁ strī-ratna-bhūtānām aṣṭau yāḥ prāg udāhṛtāḥ

rukmiṇī-pramukhā rājaṁs tat-putrāś cānupūrvaśaḥ

TRANSLATION

Among these jewellike women were eight principal queens, headed by Rukmiṇī. I have already described them one after another, O King, along with their sons.

COMMENTARY

Those eight of whom the principal queen was Rukmiṇī were previously described (*udāhṛtāḥ:uktāḥ*), as well as their sons.

|| 10.90.31 ||

ekaikasyāṁ daśa daśa kṛṣṇo ’jījanad ātmajān

yāvatya ātmano bhāryā amogha-gatir īśvaraḥ

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, whose endeavor never fails, begot ten sons in each of His many wives.

COMMENTARY

There is an alternate version *amogha ratiḥ* instead of *amogha-gatir*. In that case the meaning is “one whose desires do not go in vain and are always fulfilled.”

|| 10.90.32 ||

teṣām uddāma-vīryāṇām aṣṭā-daśa mahā-rathāḥ

āsann udāra-yaśasas teṣāṁ nāmāni me śṛṇu

TRANSLATION

Among these sons, all possessing unlimited valor, eighteen were mahā-rathas of great renown. Now hear their names from me.

|| 10.90.33-34 ||

pradyumnaś cāniruddhaś ca dīptimān bhānur eva ca

sāmbo madhur bṛhadbhānuś citrabhānur vṛko 'ruṇaḥ

puṣkaro vedabāhuś ca śrutadevaḥ sunandanaḥ

citrabāhur virūpaś ca kavir nyagrodha eva ca

TRANSLATION

They were Pradyumna, Aniruddha, Dīptimān, Bhānu, Sāmba, Madhu, Bṛhadbhānu, Citrabhānu, Vṛka, Aruṇa, Puṣkara, Vedabāhu, Śrutadeva, Sunandana, Citrabāhu, Virūpa, Kavi and Nyagrodha.

COMMENTARY

The Aniruddha mentioned here is Kṛṣṇa's son, not His well-known grandson through Pradyumna.

|| 10.90.35 ||

eteṣām api rājendra tanu-jānāṁ madhu-dviṣaḥ

pradyumna āsīt prathamaḥ pitṛ-vad rukmiṇī-sutaḥ

TRANSLATION

O best of kings, of these sons begotten by Lord Kṛṣṇa, the enemy of Madhu, the most prominent was Rukmiṇī's son Pradyumna. He was just like His father.

|| 10.90.36 ||

sa rukmiṇo duhitaram upayeme mahā-rathaḥ

tasyāṁ tato 'niruddho 'bhūt nāgāyata-balānvitaḥ

TRANSLATION

The great warrior Pradyumna married Rukmī's daughter [Rukmavatī], who gave birth to Aniruddha. He was as strong as ten thousand elephants.

|| 10.90.37 ||

sa cāpi rukmiṇaḥ pautrīṁ dauhitro jagṛhe tataḥ

vajras tasyābhavad yas tu mauṣalād avaśeṣitaḥ

TRANSLATION

Rukmī's daughter's son [Aniruddha] married Rukmī's son's daughter [Rocana]. From her was born Vajra, who would remain among the few survivors of the Yadus' battle with clubs.

|| 10.90.38 ||

pratibāhur abhūt tasmāt subāhus tasya cātmajaḥ

subāhoḥ śāntaseno 'bhūc chatasenas tu tat-sutaḥ

TRANSLATION

From Vajra came Pratibāhu, whose son was Subāhu. Subāhu's son was Śāntasena, from whom Śatasena was born.

|| 10.90.39 ||

na hy etasmin kule jātā adhanā abahu-prajāḥ

alpāyuṣo 'lpa-vīryāś ca abrahmaṇyāś ca jajñire

TRANSLATION

No one born in this family was poor in wealth or progeny, short-lived, weak or neglectful of brahminical culture.

|| 10.90.40 ||

yadu-vaṁśa-prasūtānāṁ puṁsāṁ vikhyāta-karmaṇām

saṅkhyā na śakyate kartum api varṣāyutair nṛpa

TRANSLATION

The Yadu dynasty produced innumerable great men of famous deeds. Even in tens of thousands of years, O King, one could never count them all.

|| 10.90.41 ||

tisraḥ koṭyaḥ sahasrāṇām aṣṭāśīti-śatāni ca

āsan yadu-kulācāryāḥ kumārāṇām iti śrutam

TRANSLATION

I have heard from authoritative sources that the Yadu family employed 38,800,000 teachers just to educate their children.

COMMENTARY

The teachers (*ācāryāḥ:adhyāpakāḥ*) for the thousands (*sahasrāṇām*) of children numbered 30,008,800.

|| 10.90.42 ||

saṅkhyānaṁ yādavānāṁ kaḥ kariṣyati mahātmanām

yatrāyutānām ayuta-lakṣeṇāste sa āhukaḥ

TRANSLATION

Who can count all the great Yādavas, when among them King Ugrasena alone was accompanied by an entourage of thirty trillion attendants?

COMMENTARY

The plural number of the word *ayutānām* (tens of thousands) indicates that King Ugrasena had specifically thirty trillion attendants, rather than an indefinite number of tens of trillions. This can be understood by applying the interpretational rule of *kapiñjalādhikaraṇa*, the logic of "referring to pigeons": Somewhere in the *Vedas* is found the injunction that "one should sacrifice some pigeons." This plural number should be taken to mean not an indiscriminate number of pigeons, but precisely three of them, since the Vedas never leave any matter vague. Thus *āyutānām ayuta-lakṣeṇa* "with a lakh of *ayutas* of *ayutas*" means three times 10,000 (*ayuta*) times 10,000 (*ayuta*) times 100,000 (*lakṣa*), or 30,000,000,000,000, which is three *sankhas*.

The description is in the present tense to express Śukadeva's realization of the eternal nature of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes.

|| 10.90.43 ||

devāsurāhava-hatā daiteyā ye su-dāruṇāḥ

te cotpannā manuṣyeṣu prajā dṛptā babādhire

TRANSLATION

The savage descendants of Diti who had been killed in past ages in battles between the demigods and demons took birth among human beings and arrogantly harassed the general populace.

|| 10.90.44 ||

tan-nigrahāya hariṇā proktā devā yadoḥ kule

avatīrṇāḥ kula-śataṁ teṣām ekādhikaṁ nṛpa

TRANSLATION

To subdue these demons, Lord Hari told the demigods to descend into the dynasty of Yadu. They comprised 101 clans, O King.

COMMENTARY

The phrase *kula-śataṁ ekādhikaṁ*, "A dynasty of one hundred and one clans" is the enumeration of the clans, not of the individual persons, since they were countless.

|| 10.90.45 ||

teṣāṁ pramāṇaṁ bhagavān prabhutvenābhavad dhariḥ

ye cānuvartinas tasya vavṛdhuḥ sarva-yādavāḥ

TRANSLATION

Because Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Yādavas accepted Him as their ultimate authority. And among them, all those who were His intimate associates especially flourished.

COMMENTARY

Those who were Kṛṣṇa's intimate associates (*anuvartinaḥ*), all in the form of Yādavas, increased (*vavṛdhuḥ*) the numbers of Yadus. Kṛṣṇa alone could count their numbers because such counting was beyond the comprehension of even persons like Lord Brahmā.

|| 10.90.46 ||

śayyāsanāṭanālāpa-krīḍā-snānādi-karmasu

na viduḥ santam ātmānaṁ vṛṣṇayaḥ kṛṣṇa-cetasaḥ

TRANSLATION

The Vṛṣṇis were so absorbed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness that they forgot their own bodies while sleeping, sitting, walking, conversing, playing, bathing and so on.

|| 10.90.47 ||

tīrthaṁ cakre nṛponaṁ yad ajani yaduṣu svaḥ-sarit pāda-śaucaṁ

vidviṭ-snigdhāḥ svarūpaṁ yayur ajita-para śrīr yad-arthe 'nya-yatnaḥ

yan-nāmāmaṅgala-ghnaṁ śrutam atha gaditaṁ yat-kṛto gotra-dharmaḥ

kṛṣṇasyaitan na citraṁ kṣiti-bhara-haraṇaṁ kāla-cakrāyudhasya

TRANSLATION

The heavenly Ganges is a holy place of pilgrimage because her waters wash Lord Kṛṣṇa's feet. But when the Lord descended among the Yadus, His glories eclipsed the Ganges as a holy place. Both those who hated Kṛṣṇa and those who loved Him attained eternal forms like His in the spiritual world. The unattainable and supremely self-satisfied goddess of fortune, for the sake of whose favor everyone else struggles, belongs to Him alone. His name destroys all inauspiciousness when heard or chanted. He alone has set forth the principles of the various disciplic successions of sages. What wonder is it that He, whose personal weapon is the wheel of time, relieved the burden of the earth?

COMMENTARY

Summing up the Tenth Canto, the jewel mine of Kṛṣṇa's eternal pastimes, Śukadeva mentions five unique qualities distinguishing Śrī Kṛṣṇa from all His other expansions, plenary portions and incarnations.

First, Kṛṣṇa's reputation as a sacred place of pilgrimage (*tīrthaṁ*) eclipsed that of the holy Ganges when He descended into the Yadu dynasty. Previous to this, Gaṅgā-devī was the most sacred of all *tīrthas*, being the water that had bathed Lord Vāmanadeva's lotus feet.

Second, Kṛṣṇa gave liberation not only to His surrendered devotees but also to His enemies. Loving devotees like the Vraja-gopīs attained the opportunity to enjoy pastimes of conjugal love with Kṛṣṇa's personal form (*svarūpam*) in the spiritual world. Whereas, inimical demons like Kaṁsa, who were killed by Kṛṣṇa, attained the *sāyujya-mukti* of merging into His divine form.

Third, Lakṣmī-devī, Lord Nārāyaṇa's constant companion, whom great demigods such as Brahmā serve menially to win her slight favor, could not conquer (*ajita*) Kṛṣṇa. Even by severe austerities she could not bring Kṛṣṇa under control and enjoy the *rāsa-līlā* as the Vraja-gopīs did.

Fourth, the name Kṛṣṇa is superior to the name Nārāyaṇa and to the names of all Kṛṣṇa's other expansions. These two syllables—*kṛṣ* and *ṇa*—combine together to destroy all inauspiciousness and illusion. Or, chanting that holy name eradicates all ignorance (*nāmāmaṅgala-ghnaṁ*) of Kṛṣṇa's supreme position, thus capturing even the liberated souls. Recitation of Kṛṣṇa's holy name is *śruta-matha* in the sense that it totally crushes (*mathnāti*) the excellence of all other spiritual practices described in the revealed scriptures (*śruta*).

In the words of the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*,

> *sahasra-nāmnāṁ puṇyānāṁ trir āvṛttyā tu yat phalam*
>
> *ekāvṛttyā tu kṛṣṇasya nāmaikaṁ tat prayacchati*
>
> "By uttering the single name of Kṛṣṇa just once, one attains the same benefit as that gained by reciting Lord Viṣṇu's thousand names three times."

Fifth, Kṛṣṇa solidly reinstated *dharma*, the bull of religion (*gotra-dharma*) on his four legs of compassion, austerity, cleanliness and truth. Thus *dharma* could once again become *gotra*, the protector of the earth. At the end of Dvāpara-yuga, *dharma* was lacking three legs as is stated in the words of mother earth, in the form of a cow, to the personality of religious principles in the form of a bull: *caturbhirvartase yena, pādair loka-sukhāvahaiḥ*, "Once you too were maintained by your four legs, and you increased happiness all over the universe by the mercy of the Lord." (SB 1.16.25)

Since Kṛṣṇa alone possesses these five wonderful characteristics, His removing the earth's burden is not at all astonishing; though it may be for the common man.

|| 10.90.48 ||

jayati jana-nivāso devakī-janma-vādo

yadu-vara-pariṣat svair dorbhir asyann adharmam

sthira-cara-vṛjina-ghnaḥ su-smita-śrī-mukhena

vraja-pura-vanitānāṁ vardhayan kāma-devam

TRANSLATION

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is He who is known as jana-nivāsa, the ultimate resort of all living entities, and who is also known as Devakīnandana or Yaśodā-nandana, the son of Devakī and Yaśodā. He is the guide of the Yadu dynasty, and with

His mighty arms He kills everything inauspicious, as well as every man who is impious. By His presence He destroys all things inauspicious for all living entities, moving and inert. His blissful smiling face always increases the lusty desires of the gopīs of Vṛndāvana. May He be all glorious and happy!

COMMENTARY

If someone says, “Alas! Alas! What misfortune that Kṛṣṇa did not continue to manifest His intimate pastimes down to the present time.” To console such persons, Śukadeva Gosvāmī has composed this beautiful verse.

“Living (*nivāso*) among human beings (*jana:manuśyeṣu*) such as the cowherds and the Yādavas, Kṛṣṇa remains the most glorious (*jayati*) for all time.”

The word *jayati*, “He is victorious” means that Kṛṣṇa is eternally present in this world —in His holy abode, His holy name and the recitation of His glories. This is indicated by the word *jayati*, which is in the present tense rather than the past. One should not expect Śukadeva to have used the imperative case, *jayatu* instead of *jayati*, because being Kṛṣṇa’s devotee, it would be improper for him to demand blessings from the Lord. All his desires were already fulfilled because the Lord’s blessings are always available.

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued, “It is definitively concluded that Kṛṣṇa took birth from two Devakīs, the wives of Nanda and Vasudeva (*Devakī-janma-vādo*).” That Devakī is a second name for mother Yaśodā is confirmed in *Bṛhad-viṣṇu Purāṇa*:

> *dve nāmni nanda-bhāryāyā, yaśodā devakīti ca atah*
>
> *sakhyam abhūt tasya, devakyā śauri-jāyayā*
>
> “The wife of Nanda had two names, Yaśodā and also Devakī. Therefore it was natural that Yaśodā, the wife of Nanda, develop friendship with Devakī, the wife of Śauri [Vasudeva].”

Śukadeva Himself has said conclusively that Kṛṣṇa was born from both Devakīs: *devakyām iva yaśodāyām*. (SB 10.2.9)

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself states, *vādaḥ pravadatām aham*: “I am the natural conclusion (*vādaḥ*) of all arguments.” (Bg. 10.32) The word *vādaḥ* also refers to “philosophical theory,” as in *ārambha vāda* (the theory that the creation has no beginning) and *pariṇāma-vāda* (the theory of the creation emanates from the Supreme).

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said, “Kṛṣṇa’s eternal associates were the best of the Yadu dynasty (*yadu-vara-pariṣat*), some of whom were cowherd men in Vraja and others were *kṣatriyas* in Mathurā and Dvārakā. With His own arms, or by His devotees like Arjuna who are just like His own arms, Kṛṣṇa kills the demons opposing religion (*asyann adharmam*). Thus Kṛṣṇa destroys the misery (*vṛjina: saṁsāra-duḥkham*) of material life of all nonmoving and moving entities, and removes the suffering due to separation of the inhabitants of Vraja and Dvārakā.”

“With His blissful smiling face, Kṛṣṇa, who is lust personified (*kāma-devam*), always increases the lusty desires (*vardhayan kāma-devam*) of the damsels of Vraja and the city women of Mathurā and Dvārakā, who are completely attracted to Him. In this way Kṛṣṇa remains eternally glorious (*jayati*).” The transcendental Kāmadeva (god of love) is a brilliant spiritual personality arising from Kṛṣṇa’s own internal spiritual nature. The word *devam* in *kāma-devam* means bright or spiritual.

Thus Śukadeva Gosvāmī has stated that all the pastimes occurring in Vraja, Mathurā and Dvārakā, which are described in the Tenth Canto, are eternal. The detailed dynamics of the eternal nature of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes are thoroughly described with logical reasoning in my commentary on *Ujjvala-nīlaṁaṇi*. And at the end of the Eleventh Canto, it will be more elaborately commented under the topic of Kṛṣṇa’s disappearance.

|| 10.90.49 ||

itthaṁ parasya nija-vartma-rirakṣayātta-

līlā-tanos tad-anurūpa-viḍambanāni

karmāṇi karma-kaṣaṇāni yadūttamasya

śrūyād amuṣya padayor anuvṛttim icchan

TRANSLATION

To protect the principles of devotional service to Himself, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the best of the Yadus, accepts the pastime forms that have been glorified here in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. One who desires to faithfully serve His lotus feet should hear of the activities He performs in each of these incarnations—activities that suitably imitate those of the forms He assumes. Hearing narrations of these pastimes destroys the reactions to fruitive work.

COMMENTARY

Having established that the pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa are eternal, Śukadeva Gosvāmī prescribes hearing about them in this verse. How can it be described (verse 47) that all Kṛṣṇa’s eternal associates became situated in His exclusive abode? This is answered here that even those who merely listen (*śrūyāt*) to the pastimes Kṛṣṇa enjoyed with His associates will also attain eternal residence in the spiritual world.

As previously described, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa manifests His personal forms (*tanos:nija-vigrahaḥ*) in this material world in order to protect His own principles of religion (*nija-vartma*), namely devotional service. Śrī Kṛṣṇa appears simply out of His mercy; otherwise He remains imperceptible to everyone. One should hear about the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa's various incarnations, which display activities befitting that particular *avatāra*. Though these incarnations may appear to be engaged in inferior, mundane activities, nevertheless, one should hear about their pastimes, which actually display unequalled and unexcelled majesty. Such hearing will destroy the reactions (*karma-kaṣaṇāni*) to fruitive work.

|| 10.90.50 ||

martyas tayānusavam edhitayā mukunda

śrīmat-kathā-śravaṇa-kīrtana-cintayaiti

tad dhāma dustara-kṛtānta-javāpavargaṁ

grāmād vanaṁ kṣiti-bhujo 'pi yayur yad-arthāḥ

TRANSLATION

By regularly hearing, chanting and meditating on the beautiful topics of Lord Mukunda with ever-increasing sincerity, a mortal being will attain the divine kingdom of the Lord, where the inviolable power of death holds no sway. For this purpose, many persons, including great kings, abandoned their mundane homes and took to the forest.

COMMENTARY

For the *Śrimad-Bhāgavatam's* Tenth Canto, this verse is the *phala-śruti* (fruit of hearing), the promise of success. How can one attain the success of entering the spiritual world (*tad dhāma*)! By steadily hearing and chanting about the beautiful topics (*śrīmat-kathā*) of Kṛṣṇa, one will begin to meditate (*cintayaiti*) on them, and then start continuously (*edhitayā:vardhitayā*) thinking, "By what method will I attain Kṛṣṇa and when?'' This verse states that Kṛṣṇa's abode is beyond the influence of time since it destroys (*apavargaḥ:nāśaḥ*) the unavoidable force of death. One method of attaining Śrī Kṛṣṇa's eternal domain is mentioned beginning with the word *grāmāt* (home). The phrase (*kṣiti-bhujaḥ*) "kings" implies that kings such as Svāyambhuva Manu and Priyavrata renounced their homes and kingdoms and went to the forest in search of Kṛṣṇa.

navatitamo 'trādhyāyo, daśame sārārtha-darśinyām,

saṇgata eṣa skandho 'py astu, satāṁ saṇgato hṛdi me

"The *Sārārtha-darśinī* commentary on the ninetieth chapter of the Tenth Canto has now gradually reached its completion, and so has the Canto. This has been accomplished by the association given to me by the devotees of the Lord from within my heart."

mad-gavīr api gopālaḥ svī-kuryāt kṛpayā yadi

tadaivāsāṁ payaḥ pītvā hṛṣyeyus tat-priyā janāḥ

"O Gopalā, please accept and maintain the cows in the form of my words. Please experience the pleasure of personally drinking that milk, and inspire others to do the same."

māghasya kṛṣṇa-dvādaśyāṁ, rādhā-kṛṣṇa-sāras-taṭe,

daśama-skandha-ṭīkeyam, apūri kṛpaya prabhoḥ

"By the mercy of the Lord, I completed this COMMENTARY on the Tenth Canto on the twelfth day (Dvādaśī) of the dark fortnight of Māgha (Jan.-Feb.) on the banks of Rādhā-kuṇda."